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BEA CABRERA

SandCastle Saipan entertainers, management, and production crew bid goodbye after almost 16 years of mesmerizing the people of Saipan.

SandCastle makes final curtain call this Saturday

By BEA CABRERA
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CORRESPONDENT

After almost 16 years of bringing a one-of-a-kind dinner and entertainment showcase in the CNMI, SandCastle Saipan is making its final curtain call this Saturday, March 31.

The cast and crew bid adieu with mixed emotions but as the saying goes, the show must go on.

Leon Etienne, America's rock illusionist and trained in Las Vegas which is known to be the world's magic Mecca, said that he has performed in exactly 520 shows from the day he started in April 1, 2017

See SANDCASTLE on Page 4

Devotees trek up Mt. Tapochao today

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Hundreds of devote Catholics will make their way up the highest point on Saipan today in remembrance of Christ's journey before he was crucified.

Today is popularly known as Good Friday for those who are believers of the Christian faith. Good Friday is part of the Holy Week celebration that started last Sunday, popularly known as Palm Sunday.

Every year, a selected parish on Saipan is given the opportunity to organize the Good Friday trek and this year, the role was given to the San Antonio Parish.

According to Father Romil Aperocho preparations

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KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

The 30-foot wooden cross that will be carried by devote Catholics up Mt. Tapochao this morning has been mounted on display for the entire community to see since the beginning of Holy Week last Sunday. The cross will be mounted on the highest point of Mt. Tapochao today for the duration of the year and will be replaced next Good Friday.

USDA: Large ENAP, NAP balances trouble CNMI

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

» 'Nothing political; nothing personal'

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's (Ind-MP) request for information made him fear for food assistance program funding after a federal agency pointed out the large leftover balances from grants issued to the CNMI from the previous fiscal year for the same purpose.

Sablan, in a press conference Wednesday, said that significant carried over balances from fiscal year 2017 could hinder the CNMI's block grant funding for

See USDA on Page 4

Codel concludes with wreath-laying at AMP

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinares@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» Murkowski: Addressing workforce issues require legislation

Sen. Lisa Murkowski's (R-AK) congressional delegation concluded its one-day visit to the CNMI with a customary wreath laying held at the American Memorial Park last Tuesday.

In a brief address immediately following the wreath laying ceremony, Murkowski said the wreath represented the sacrifices NMI residents made to defend freedom as well as place a mark in the world.

"It has been a true honor to be immersed in this his-

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Thursday marks 365 days until Britain officially leaves the European Union on March 29, 2019, ending a 46-year marriage.
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High-level officials from North and South Korea began talks at a border village Thursday to prepare for an April summit between their leaders.
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OFFBEAT
Scientists have the dirt on the rubber ducky: Those cute yellow bath-time toys area ARE a haven for nasty bugs.
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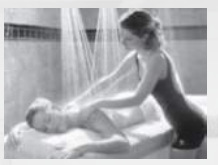
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Aquino working on cultural center

NMI Museum director Daniel Aquino is looking at building the islands' first Chamorro/Carolinian cultural center on the grounds of the museum.

Aquino is looking at kicking off the project as early as July this year. The center will not only be educational but could also serve as a tourist attraction.

Aquino's idea is to build 15 cottages that will be placed strategically on the vacant museum lot. The cottages will surround a stage that will be built for cultural performances.

The cottages will be open to individuals who want to showcase anything pertaining to the Chamorro or Carolinian culture.

The cultural center will showcase only indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian food, art, dances, etc.

Aquino is confident that he can complete the establishment of a cultural center within his targeted time frame, just as he did with the major renovations made to the NMI Museum.

Aquino plans to start off with the construction of a stage and the construction of at least seven cottages by July 4.

The only challenge is funding. Aquino has already asked for $250,000 from the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation. The funding will not only go to the construction of a cultural center, but also the construction of additional storage space for artifacts that cannot be displayed in the museum. ***(Kimberly A. Bautista)***

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Senator concerned with PSS casino tax appropriations

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinares@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A Rota senator is concerned that the total casino gross revenue tax appropriations to the Public School System since fiscal year 2017 represents only 19 percent of total CGRT, as opposed to the constitutional mandate of 25 percent.

Sen. Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) cited a recent Legislative Bureau report, saying he remains concerned about the Legislature's appropriation of less than 25 percent of revenues, which includes the CGRT.

The CGRT is obtained by taxing 5 percent of revenue generated by the casino.

PSS has been appropriated a total of over $22 million in CGRT from fiscal year 2016 and 2017. The total CGRT comes in at over $116.25 million for both fiscal years.

The $22 million is only about 19 percent of $116.25 million, and is therefore not compliant with the CNMI Constitution, which states that PSS is entitled to 25 percent. In order to comply with the CNMI Constitution, PSS needs to be appropriated over $29 million.

The Legislative Bureau report states that for Public Law 19-75, or the first supplemental appropriation of additional funds derived from the fiscal year 2016 CGRT, PSS got $10.2 million of the total $40.9 million. That makes P.L. 19-75 compliant with the CNMI Constitution.

P.L. 20-42, which noted a total CGRT of over $46 million, allocated $11.8 million to PSS and is also compliant with the constitution.

The problem is that the Legislature also passed three more CGRT appropriation bills in between those two public laws, which did not allocate anything to PSS.

P.L. 20-04 was enacted to take care of the land compensation judgments issued by the CNMI Judiciary, which had deadlines. P.L. 20-04 took care of the CNMI's largest land compensation debt of $16 million.

P.L. 20-09 paid $7 million to the Settlement Fund balances owed since fiscal years 2014 and 2015, when settlement fund trustee Joyce Tang issued an ultimatum to the CNMI government, threatening to cease assisting the government with the processing of the 25 percent payments to retirees. Retiree benefits were not disrupted.

P.L. 20-16 retroactively addressed balances owed to employees whose salaries got stuck at Step 12.

Manglona told *Saipan Tribune* that he believes the Legislature's attempts to "divert" tax revenue into special accounts undermine the intention of the constitution.

"As I have stated in the past, this issue has to be resolved once and for all through the Supreme Court certified-question route," he said.

According to the same report, PSS was appropriated a budget of over $89.9 million in fiscal year 2018, $38.8 million of which were from federal grants.

The Legislature appropriated a total of over $36.6 million in funding from the general funds, which will go to salaries, board member salaries, and the Cooperative Education Program. PSS' other sources of funding include the Tobacco Settlement (Public Law 13-37); the Compact Impact agreement; the Tobacco Control Fund, and the CGRT. Besides the general fund, PSS was appropriated at least $14.3 million in earmarks and alternate sources of funding.

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SANDCASTLE

From Page 1

up to the second show on March 31.

"When we found out… it's prematurely I think… I couldn't figure out why because business is good and we attract a lot of customers here for the tour agents and Baldyga Group themselves. We scouted out other resorts but it doesn't look like there is another facility than can hold the show this big," he said.

"I have so many good moments on the show such as when you look out there and you see people from all over the world on vacation with their families. You get the youngest and the oldest members of the family then you see them both enjoying what's going on at the stage same time and same perspective, it is awesome," he added.

When a door closes, a window opens and this is true for Etienne as he is already committed to pursuing more of his work on a bigger stage.

"After the last show, I am taking a seven-week vacation then I'm going to be headlining on a luxury cruise ship for the summer for 17 weeks, a casino tour around America, and in 2019, there are a couple of TV shows that I am going to be working on, and a couple of other tours that we are putting together," he said.

"I'll miss coming in and seeing our local crew every night. Jojo Valencia, our office manager; the people, and especially the tourists of Saipan… I would be interested to come back to Saipan that I treat as my second home. I have met so many lifelong friends and have so many wonderful experiences," he added.

Couple Chris and Ryan Zubrick were the headliners at the SandCastle Saipan Dinner Theatre from June 2007 until January 2015 and are currently doing the shows in Guam.

"We were not the first illusionists at the SandCastleC Saipan, however, we were the longest running act in the history of the show and in the history of the SandCastle company as a whole including Guam. We performed over 4,000 shows in the SandCastle Saipan Theatre and called it home," they said.

"Over the course of our 7.5 years there we entertained Japanese, Korean, Russian, and Chinese tourists with our unique blend of magic and illusion…It is very sad to hear about the SandCastle Saipan Theatre closing. As mentioned, it was a place we called home for so many years, spent countless time on that stage rehearsing, working on new material and performing twice nightly," they said.

The Zubricks are most grateful to have a permanent performance space on SandCastle Saipan.

"…It was nice to settle down in one performance venue and spend the time and energy perfecting our routines, brainstorming new material, and rehearsing new routines…Our background in theatre allowed us to edit the music, program the lighting, build some of the scenic elements, stage the cast and props, and take and idea and turn it into a full production number with the limited resourced available on Saipan. We were very proud of what we accomplished in our time there," they said.

"We will miss the theatre… It was a very intimate theatre, especially compared to the Guam venue we are in now… We will miss the passionate, talented, local stage crew who worked so hard behind the scenes to make what we did in front of the curtain look flawless. We've met so many talented dancers during our time working there, many of them are friendships we still maintain and will enjoy for years to come," they added.

Chuck McCarroll, director of Entertainment, co-produces the shows with executive producer Mark Baldyga and is responsible for all aspects of all the Baldyga Group shows.

"It has been a great run in Saipan. Of course we are sorry to see it close. The SandCastle Saipan Theatre and all the shows we have produced there are very special to me. I was very closely involved with the design and renovation of the facility and all the subsequent work we have done there…I will certainly miss the space and seeing the connection between performer and audience," he said.

"The crew over the years has done a fantastic job running the shows, maintaining the theatre and equipment. Although most of the crew did not have theatre backgrounds when they started working with us, they loved the work and worked very hard to always present an outstanding performance. The crew has been extremely dedicated and take big pride in presenting the best show on-island. I owe them all a big thank you!" he added.

And that last piece of the puzzle that made SandCastle Saipan a success is operations manager Jojo Valencia.

"When I learned that we are ending first quarter of this year I was surprised and very sad because I have been with the production since the show came here in 2002. We are slowly sending all our equipment back to Guam and hopefully another show opens soon," he said.

"Yes we are sending everything back including Nepal the tiger. It's hard to believe that we are almost done here… it is sad but I am so thankful and proud to be part of the Baldyga and SandCastle Saipan family," he added.

Valencia admits that he doesn't know yet the plans on the last show on Saturday. He said that lately, he cannot watch the show in its entirety because it just makes him sad.

"Last week I sat to watch the show but became very emotional because I am so attached to this. Every night since I started working here, I see people come and go with big smiles on their faces and we have never heard anything bad about the show… that will be hard to forget," he said.

"We are getting a lot of reservations for the last show and most of them from locals. It's going to be a special night as executives from Guam are coming. It's going to be emotional at some point but it will definitely be exciting as we are expecting full house 7pm and 8:45pm shows," he added.

Although the show is ending this weekend, Valencia is fulfilled that the show reached a point that it is part of the community as people depend on them in some aspects of their lives.

"Just few nights ago, a kid celebrated his 10th birthday watching the show. He wanted so much to watch but waited until his birthday and his parents made it special by granting his wish," he said.

"Knowing the backstory, of course we took care of him and made it a very memorable 10th birthday. A story like this is the one that sticks in your memory and in your heart. The show maybe ending but the magic of moments like those live forever. Thank you very much Saipan!" he added.

DEVOTEES

From Page 1

for the trek started as early as Wednesday. The Saipan Mayor's Office started the road clearing and tent mounting on Wednesday and completed the job on Thursday.

The trek will commence at approximately 5:30am today. Aperocho said the community is welcome to gather at the San Antonio Parish beginning 4:30am to start the convoy to pick up the 30-foot cross from the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa.

Rumors spread that this year food will no longer be distributed. According to Aperocho, organizations are still welcome to distribute food as long as it is in compliance with the fasting done before the trek, which means all food distributed must be without meat.

According to Aperocho, the community can also expect something new during the Resurrection Day mass on Sunday.

Aperocho said the San Antonio Parish has prepared an *enkuentro* or "encounter of Jesus" that will lead into the Sunday Mass.

The mass will begin after procession or after the picture of the Mother Dela Rosa and the Risen Jesus statue are carried and placed at the mass grounds, and after the veil of sorrow is removed from the Mother Dela Rosa.

The San Antonio Parish is encouraging the community to partake in both the trek and the Resurrection Day mass. A potluck is encouraged after the Resurrection Day mass.

CODEL

From Page 1

tory here today on Saipan; this morning on Tinian; yesterday in Guam; [and then] Palau to truly understand what the people of this region have given for freedom. Thank you for allowing my husband and I to be able to pay tribute and honor the sacrifices of so many. We are honored and blessed to be with you," she said.

Both Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) immediately expressed their gratitude towards the codel's visit.

"Thank you for your time. We are very blessed to have Senator Murkowski visit the islands. It's a great honor to have her here. Each and every one of us appreciates her fighting for us and being our voice in Washington, D.C," said Torres.

The wreath laying was significant in paying respects to the "sacrifices made by both the men and women…and also by the victims who are indigenous" Sablan said.

Following the wreath-laying ceremony, Murkowski in a brief press conference said that she was compelled to drafting and championing legislation to address workforce issues as it continues to haunt the region.

"If you don't have a workforce, you don't have much of an economy. You can't attract investment, you can't attract tourism, you can't attract [economic stability], you can't build [an economy] without the workers, so recognizing that there needed to be a path forward, we saw the challenges and recognized that the only way we would be able to address it was through legislation," he said.

Murkowski chairs the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources as well as leads the bipartisan bicameral working group tasked with studying the parameters of the CNMI-Only Transitional Worker program extension.

On Jan. 19, 2018, after much discussion and negotiation within the working group, Murkowski introduced S.2325 to the U.S. Senate, while Sablan simultaneously introduced H.R. 4869 to the U.S. House.

S. 2325, or the U.S. Workforce Act, seeks to reset the CW cap for fiscal year 2019 to 13,000; provide additional validity to long-time CW workers; and extend the CNMI transitional period, along with programs under it such as the CW program and the E-2C investor program, to fiscal year 2029.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services disregarded Sablan's and Torres' request for a reprieve on the minimal CW slot limitation of 4,999 for fiscal year 2019 by announcing that they would start accepting CW applications and renewals for the fiscal year as early as April 2, 2018.

Murkowski during the same press conference said that she believes that the U.S. Senate would unanimously support S.2325. She added that if obtained, the unanimous U.S. Senate support acts as a "message" to U.S. President Donald J. Trump, who has had iron-fisted immigration stances even before officially taking office.

S.2325 is currently placed at the U.S. Senate calendar for action.

Murkowski made the visit to the CNMI on the invitation of both Torres and Sablan.

USDA

From Page 1

the Nutritional Assistance Program grant and the Enhanced Nutritional Assistance Program Farm Bill grant.

The delegate said he fears that the current $22-million ENAP Farm Bill grant could be reduced after finding out from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services informed his office that about $18.4 million was carried forward into fiscal year 2018.

ENAP grant funding totals at $27 million for fiscal year 2018.

The Farm Bill, which Sablan said is now in discussion at the U.S. House of Representatives, is a large bill that authorizes the use of monies set aside for the specific bill. Reauthorization is set at five-year intervals, Sablan explained.

Because of this, Sablan fears that with the significant balance carried over from fiscal year 2017, funds might not be fully expended by the time the U.S. House completes the deliberation on the reauthorization of the Farm Bill, potentially cutting CNMI ENAP grant allocations.

"I am trying to get additional money; I am trying to ask for $42.5 million for authorization under the Farm Bill. If we don't do that, we will not get money for [ENAP] the next five years," said Sablan.

He explained that the CNMI was able to secure about $32.5 million back in 2014 for pilot funds from the previous Farm Bill authorization. Sablan said this was one of USDA's ways to conduct a feasibility study.

Fiscal year 2017 carried over funding from the NAP grant was also high. According to a USDA response to Sablan's office, the CNMI from the beginning of fiscal year 2018 carried over $4.1 millions of the base CNMI annual NAP block grant of $12.1 million from fiscal year 2017.

"This number is significantly higher than usual and likely represents a cost allocation issue between NAP and ENAP grants. FNS is working with the CNMI to address this issue and expects this balance will adjust downard to between $1.5 million and $2 million, which is the typical level of carry over for the NAP," USDA specified in an unnamed response to Sablan.

According to Sablan, his office reached out to local offices administering the NAP and ENAP for data but to no avail. His office also reached out to the Region IX office of the FNS, but also to no avail. He said his office had to contact USDA itself for the data.

"The reason the [U.S. House committee] cannot support my request is because there is that money sitting there," said Sablan. "[U.S. Congress] will give me the money if they can see that it is being spent. They won't give you money in Congress if they don't see you spending money," he added, in response to media reports stating that local government offices are penny-pinching the funds for it to last longer.

Increase benefits, eligibility standards

Sablan said the logical way to go for expending the funds is to increase benefits as well as the eligibility standard. By increasing benefits and eligibility standards, participation in NAP and ENAP programs would also rise.

He pointed out that since there is a constant rise in minimum wage annually up to the federal level of $7.25, NAP and ENAP income eligibility standard must rise along with it in order to encompass a higher number of eligible participants.

Sablan said the plan was to allow the funds to be used up to fiscal year 2019. However, with the current projections of the grant funds, it would not happen.

With the increase in benefits and eligibility standards, it could be projected that the funds would soon be expended based on increased participation in the programs; therefore making a more compelling argument for the $42.5 million grant Sablan yearns.

A Marianas household of five must earn a combined less than $1,656 gross income per month in order to avail of $1,061, $880, and $811 in monthly benefits for Rota and the Northern Islands, Tinian, and Saipan, respectively. For Guam, which uses the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or the SNAP, a household must earn a combined less of $3,118 in order to receive monthly benefits amounting to $1,121.

Manibusan is named judge in Taisague suit vs Johnson deal

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

U.S. District Court of Guam Magistrate Judge Joaquin V. E. Manibusan Jr. has been designated as a settlement judge in the lawsuit filed by Jesus I. Taisague, who questioned the constitutionality of the settlement agreement in Betty Johnson's class action against the Retirement Fund.

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Sidney R. Thomas made the designation last week. U.S. District Court of Guam Chief Judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood, who presides over Johnson's lawsuit, concurred with the designation.

Tydingco-Gatewood handled Johnson's lawsuit after U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona recused herself from the case. The class action resulted in a settlement.

Manglona and Tydingco-Gatewood recently assigned Taisague's case to a magistrate judge in Guam.

Manglona and Tydingco-Gatewood both agreed that a judge from Guam shall be assigned to handle Taisague's lawsuit and to perform settlement duties in the case.

Manglona and Tydingco-Gatewood have determined that recusal of all local federal judges from Taisague's case has created an "emergency," requiring the temporary assignment of a judge from Guam.

Taisague filed the lawsuit in 2013 against then-governor Eloy S. Inos, the CNMI government, Department of Finance, and the Retirement Fund for entering into a settlement agreement with Johnson that, according to him, is unconstitutional and illegal.

Taisague filed the case through counsel Ramon Quichocho, who is now disbarred. Taisague was among the 16 persons who opted out of the Johnson settlement agreement. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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Vietnam vets honored with AMP ceremony

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

It may have been nearly 45 years late but Vietnam War veterans were finally honored at the American Memorial Park last Wednesday.

The CNMI government, in conjunction with the Veteran's Affairs Office, put together the first memorial service that commemorates both those who lost their lives during or after the Vietnam War and those who survived the war itself.

On March 29, 1973, the last batch of U.S. troops in Vietnam returned home after over eight years in combat during the second Indochina War, also called the Vietnam War.

A handful of the U.S. troops who served during the Vietnam War were from the Northern Marianas and, like many of their comrades, were not welcomed as heroes upon their return home.

These forgotten war heroes were finally given a tribute last Wednesday through a memorial service where a commemorative wreath-laying ceremony was done at the American Memorial Park Circle of Honor, a proclamation was signed in honor of Vietnam War veterans, and commemorative plaques and pins were distributed to Vietnam War veterans.

Frank Cepeda, the eldest son of late veteran Isidro Cepeda, and his mother received the commemorative service plaque on behalf of his father.

Veterans, veteran families, and dignified guests came together to pay tribute to the hundreds of Vietnam veterans who have passed on and who are still living today through the first Vietnam War veterans memorial ceremony yesterday at the American Memorial Park.
ERWIN ENCINARES

According to Cepeda, he was 10 years old when his father returned home from the Vietnam War. Cepeda vividly remembers his father's return, of incidents when people threw garbage at him, called him names, and were just plain awful toward him and his comrades just because they did their duty for their country.

Cepeda said that even though many saw his father and other Vietnam War veterans as awful people for serving their country, he remained proud of his father and still is. Cepeda said he knows that his father would have been overjoyed if he were alive to witness the commemoration ceremony.

Cepeda was only one of the immediate family members of a handful of other Vietnam War veteran family members present during the commemoration ceremony last Wednesday.

According to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, it is important that Vietnam War veterans are not forgotten because they were the heroes who fought with courage to serve their country even when it came down to making tough decisions.

Torres apologized for the long overdue Vietnam War veterans memorial service and assured the veterans and veteran families who were present Wednesday that Vietnam War veterans will continue to be honored in the CNMI.

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The CNMI Family Planning Program is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Population Affairs, Title X

Voter registration drive at Saipan Southern High

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Election Commission is planning to do a voter registration drive at Saipan Southern High School in Koblerville in order to accommodate students who will be turning 18 years old on or before the Nov. 6, 2018, general election.

CEC administrative officer Kayla Igitol told *Saipan Tribune* Wednesday that the Saipan Southern High voter registration date is tentatively set at May 18.

Igitol said it was Nola Hix of the Marianas Young Professionals, or MYPros, who made the request to hold the voter registration drive at SSHS.

Igitol encouraged other private and public high schools to call CEC if they are also interested in having a voter registration at their schools.

"We want to reach out to private and public schools for voter registration," she said, adding that CEC wants to increase the number of voters for this Nov. 6 election.

The registration will be open to the parents as well as other members of the community who want to register.

CEC reminded the students and members of the community to bring a copy of their birth certificate as certified by the court, a valid U.S. passport, or naturalization documents to show proof of their citizenship.

Meanwhile, Igitol reminded the public that the voter registration drive at the Kagman High School Library will be on April 13 between 11am and 3pm.

As of yesterday, there are 16,657 registered voters in the CNMI, including 145 new ones this year.

Jeffery's Beach red-flagged

The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality has red-flagged Jeffery's Beach and is advising the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of this location for the next 48 hours or until otherwise notified.

Samples collected from this beach contained excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria (enterococci) that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water.

BECQ analyzes water samples collected from Saipan's recreational beaches and storm drainage every Tuesday. For more information, contact DEQ at 664-8500.***(BECQ)***

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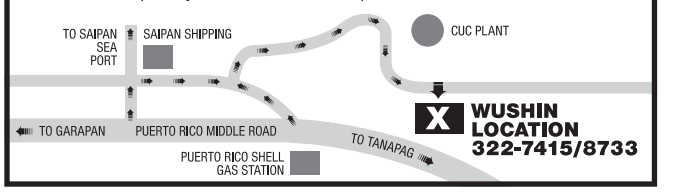

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EEOC, Philippines renew pact to combat job bias

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines have officially committed to continuing to work together to combat employment discrimination, the EEOC announced yesterday.

In a ceremony at the Philippine Embassy, EEOC acting chair Victoria A. Lipnic and Philippine Ambassador to the United States José Manuel G. Romualdez signed the renewal of the national memorandum of understanding, first signed on Feb. 12, 2015, continuing the partnership between local consulates and EEOC field offices nationwide.

Under its terms, the EEOC and the Philippine Embassy will work together to regularly provide information on workplace discrimination through joint educational sessions to Philippine nationals.

"Filipinos and Americans share the crucial core values of freedom and fairness," said Lipnic. "That's why the EEOC and the Philippine government are renewing this agreement to cooperate to fight employment discrimination and advance justice and opportunity for Filipinos in this country."

Romualdez said, "We value this partnership as a vital component of our efforts to assist the over 3.9 million Filipinos and Filipino-Americans in the United States in protecting their rights and facilitating the creation of safer and fairer work environments. The Embassy looks forward to furthering our cooperation with the EEOC in ensuring that Filipino workers in the United States are treated fairly and accorded the rights due them under U.S. law."

The agreement will carry forward the ongoing collaborative relationship between these two entities to provide Philippine nationals with information, guidance and access to education and training resources to help them exercise their workplace rights.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at www.eeoc.gov. ***(EEOC)***

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

CHamoru commission meeting

The Commission on CHamoru Language and the Teaching of History and Culture of the Indigenous People of Guam will hold its monthly meetings on April 5 and 19 and May 3 and 17, from 12:30pm to 3pm at the Department of Parks and Recreation conference room in Hagatna.

Additionally, there will be work sessions on April 12 and 19 and May 10 and 24, 2018, from 12:30pm to 3pm at the same venue.

For further information call Hope Alvarez Cristobal at 483-0097 or Rosa Salas Palomo at 727-5522. ***(PR)***

Proclamation event on April 3

The Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence and the CNMI DCCA Division of Youth Services are inviting members of the community to take part in the proclamation signing ceremony for Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse & Neglect Awareness and Prevention Month on Tuesday, April 3, 2018 at 9am at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe. The proclamation signing ceremony will recognize April 2018 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse & Neglect Awareness and Prevention Month in the CNMI. ***(PR)***

Bordallo on removal of VA's Shulkin

HAGÅTÑA, Guam—Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-GU) issued the following statement yesterday on President Trump's removal of David Shulkin as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Trump also announced via twitter that he will nominate his presidential physician, Adm. Ronny Jackson, to be the next VA secretary.

"Our veterans face serious challenges, and the VA needs stable and consistent leadership to address them. While we have made some progress here [in] Guam, local veterans continue to struggle with consistent access to healthcare, timely processing of benefits claims, and recognition of our unique challenges because of our geographic location. Guam veterans are also waiting for solutions to assertions of Agent Orange and radiation exposure from past wars. I continue working in Congress to advance these issues, and I will push for the new VA leadership to work ardently within the Trump Administration to prioritize our challenges." ***(PR)***

Palau Compact funded $123M through 2024

WASHINGTON—The newly signed 2018 Omnibus Funding Agreement includes $123 million in funding through 2024 for the 2010 Palau Compact Review Agreement, as agreed to between the United States and the Republic of Palau.

U.S. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said the Compact agreement is an important element of the Pacific national security strategy to maintain stability in the Western Pacific Region.

"Interior has held a long, historic relationship with Palau and other U.S.-affiliated Pacific Islands and we look forward to continuing our role on behalf of the U.S. Government in providing these funds to the government of Palau."

"We will be working closely with the State Department and other federal partners to move forward as quickly as possible," added Doug Domenech, the assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs.

The U.S. and Palau governments will need to meet to update the funding schedule of the 2010 agreement which required specific annual outlays of funds.

Vendors invited to NMC Charter Day

Food vendors from last year's Charter Day offered a variety of delicious food and drinks. The deadline to submit applications for booth spaces will be on April 11, 2018. To sign up for booth space for the upcoming Charter Day, call 237-6809 or email charter.day@marianas.edu.

NMC

Northern Marianas College is inviting vendors to take part in the annual Charter Day celebration on Friday, April 13, 2018.

Agencies, businesses, clubs, and other civic organizations can purchase booth space for the following categories: food and drinks (water/ coconut juice in a nut), game booths, retail (arts, and crafts, toys etc.), and informational booths.

Booth applications forms must be submitted by Wednesday, April 11, 2018, by 4pm. Note, however, that booth spaces are limited so applications should be submitted as soon as possible.

The booth fee is $150 for all commercial vendors but for student clubs and non-profit organizations, booth fees are $75.

Applications forms are available for download at www.marianas.edu or can be picked up and dropped off to Queanna Sablan in Building P.

For more information, contact Sablan at 237-6809 or email queanna.sablan@marianas.edu. Additional information about Charter Day, contact Alexis Cabrera at charter.day@marianas.edu or visit www.marianas.edu. ***(NMC)***

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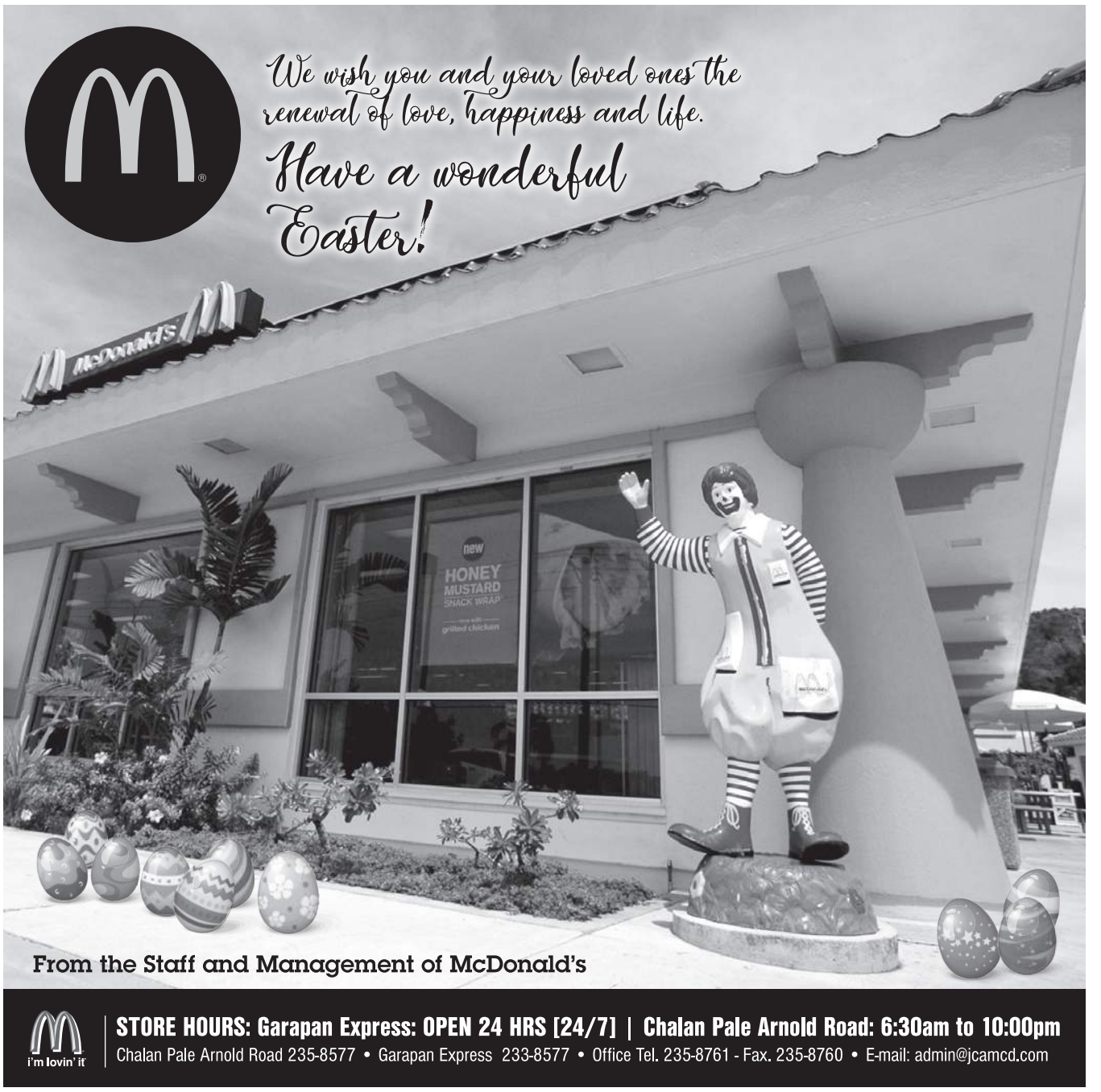
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IN CASE VS MAN FACING FORGERY, THEFT CHARGES

OPD: Preliminary hearings not intended as a sham

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Legislature did not intend for preliminary hearings to be sham proceedings, according to assistant public defender Heather M. Zona, but a right of defendants.

Zona made the declaration in a supplemental brief in support of Nelsin Saimon's motion to compel the government to produce police records and information in his case. Saimon is facing charges for stealing and forging checks.

Saimon was arrested last Jan. 27 on charges of theft and forgery. The preliminary hearing was held last Feb. 5.

Zona had accused the Office of the Attorney General of turning the preliminary hearing in a domestic violence case against a woman into a sham proceeding by calling in to testify a police detective who is not the case agent and allegedly does not know anything about the matter.

Zona later asked the court to dismiss the case against her client, Pennie Lee Concepcion Cabrera.

The OAG is opposing Saimon's motion to compel the government to produce the police report, witness statements, and any other physical evidence prior to the continuation of a preliminary hearing in the case.

Zona said the government aims to simply put an officer on the stand who will regurgitate the information in the declaration of probable cause for arrest to establish probable cause.

"This is improper, as the preliminary hearing is not intended as a proceeding for the government to simply waive its declaration of probable cause and rest on the same to establish probable cause," Zona said.

She again noted that the government's practice of withholding police reports, written statements and physical evidence it uses to establish probable cause does not comport with Saimon's constitutional rights.

Zona said there is simply no opportunity to test the veracity of the lone officer to determine whether he or she is accurately reflecting the information provided by third parties to other third parties, among other things.

She noted that the government's penchant for having a single witness testify to hearsay renders the testimony unreliable.

The OAG is opposing Saimon's motion to compel the government to produce the police report, witness statements, and any other physical evidence prior to the continuation of a preliminary hearing in the case.

In Saimon's motion to compel, Zona asked the court to order the government to provide the police records and information that a police detective had said he used to refresh his recollection and/or familiarize himself with this case prior to testifying at the preliminary hearing.

When asked for comments about OPD calling it a sham proceeding, assistant attorney general Teri C. Tenorio said she is compelled to charge only those cases of which there is evidence that an offense has been committed.

Furthermore, Tenorio said, all prosecutors must have a reasonable belief they can prevail at trial.

Last March 16, Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho dismissed without prejudice the charges against Cabrera at Tenorio's request. Dismissal without prejudice means the OAG may re-open the case in the future.

Island arts and crafts showcased in Florida

Twenty minutes northeast of Orlando, the Albin Polasek Museum in Winter Park Florida is hosting "Island Objects," an exhibit of archaeological materials and historical items from Micronesia.

It showcases traditional culture and illustrate the ways it has adapted to external societal forces through periods of Spanish, German, Japanese, and American occupation.

The exhibit was curated by Barbara Wavell, an anthropologist and author of *Arts & Crafts of Micronesia.*

A broad range of objects are represented in the exhibit including carved wooden figures and storyboards, intricately patterned fans, human statuary, navigation charts, and woven clothing and adornments.

The exhibit runs through April 15 and praised by an Orland Sentinel article in January. The 400 objects on display are all part of Wavell's personal collection, meticulously gathered and documented since 1975.

The collection began in the 1970s when Wavell was a student at Rollins College, just a block or so down the road from the Polasek. An anthropology student, Wavell browsed flea markets in search of exotic carvings.

During one such excursion, she encountered a squatting figure and a carved board that she couldn't quite place. An investigation ensued, and she determined they were from Micronesia, scattered islands between Hawaii and the Philippines.

Distinct from neighboring Polynesia and Melanesia, Micronesia includes the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and Nauru—as well as the U.S. territories of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and Wake Island.

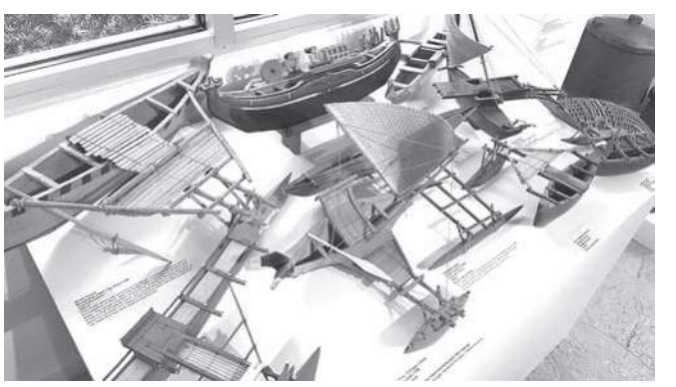
"I realized there really wasn't much information on the art of Micronesia," said Wavell, who received her undergraduate degree from Rollins and a master's degree in cultural anthropology from the State University of New York at Binghamton. 'It was very mysterious.'"

"A theme of this exhibition is adaptation," said Wavell. "They persevered with this art, no matter who happened to be in charge."

"It's a beautiful and remarkable culture," said the Polasek Museum's Rachel Frisby. "This exhibit has been wildly popular."

In conjunction with her personal collecting, academic research, and publication of texts devoted to Micronesian topics, Wavell has long partnered with Habele, a U.S.-based nonprofit serving students throughout the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Habele has provided copies of Wavell's books to public libraries, schools, and universities in Micronesia, as well as to Micronesian diplomats and U.S. officials working in the region. In 2016, Habele's LEAD Scholar made a presentation of Wavell's Woven Hand Fans of Micronesia to Amata Radewagen, the delegate for the United States House of Representatives from American Samoa.



Some of the archaeological materials and historical items from Micronesia at the "Island Objects" exhibit at the Albin Polasek Museum in Winter Park Florida. HABELE

Wavell has also provided support and research for Waa'gey, a mentorship-based after school traditional skills program. Through hands on learning about carving and sailing, Waa'gey sustains centuries old traditions and imbues young men with a sense of accomplishment and belonging. Supported by Habele, Waa'gey serves at-risk students in Yap and Chuuk States, Micronesia. ***(PR)***

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Three GCA students on NSDA national team

Grace Christian Academy students bagged several awards in this school year's regional forensic arts competitions in all divisions, from Kindergarten to 12th grade.

Three GCA students will join the CNMI team in the upcoming national competitions for National Speech and Debate Association this June in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Joshua Pajarillaga, GCA's gold medalists in two events will represent the CNMI team in International Extemporaneous Speech. He also won another gold medal in Commentary.

It will be his first time to compete at the national level and he said, "I am super grateful for the NSDA tournament. It has given me a place to express myself as it is for the other students. I gained more confidence in my abilities. I am happy that I placed in all my events, and I am looking forward to competing in the national competition."

Lanz Jabez Victoria, who will represent commentary in the CNMI team, is happy to join the CNMI team also for the first time. "I plan to compete with all I got. The regional competition was quite difficult and stressful. I am still shocked and amazed that I won, and extremely grateful for the opportunity to compete in the national competition in the U.S."

Melody Woo, who won first place in Poetry Reading, will represent that event in the national competition. She also joined the CNMI Thespian team representing monologue event in the International Thespian Festival in Lincoln, Nebraska in June.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The 2018 NJSDA winners of Grace Christian Academy have their picture taken at the Rev. Raymond S. Kinsella Library Saipan campus.

"I am very thankful for the opportunities to participate in both NSDA and Thespians regional competitions," she said. "It was difficult to balance schoolwork, practice, and my personal life, but I learned to manage time sufficiently from this experience."

Fifth graders Moira Grace Ernest and Jennifer Woo, who won both first place in Impromptu and Dramatic Interpretation, will represent GCA at the Primary Grades Forensic Conference special banquet presentation for the PGFC gold medalists at the end of the school year.

Like all the older gold medalists who started competing in PGFC competitions during their younger years, Ernest and Woo have been competing since Kindergarten.

"I can't believe I won first place in Impromptu Speaking! I feel very blessed for getting first place and I hope others will win next time," said Ernest. She thanked her brother for making her practice at home.

Woo feels very happy for winning first place at the PGFC regional competition. "I hope when I join NJSDA I will have a chance to compete in the national competition in the U.S.," she added.

Organized by the National Forensic League board with Harold Easton as the chairman and supported by the CNMI Public School System, PGFC, NJSDA, and NSDA competitions encourage public and private school students to participate in and become proficient in the forensic arts: reading, debate, public speaking, and interpretations.

Easton urged all coaches to recognize the regional competition winners, including the first round, quarter finals, semifinals, and, if they made into final rounds.

GCA's PGFC coach/coordinator and competition registrar is Esther Manzano, its NJSDA/NSDA coach is Grace Duran, and its thespian coach is Allison Burnett.

Below is the list of all the GCA regional winners in all divisions.

PGFC (K-5th Grade) FINAL ROUND WINNERS

K-2 DIVISION

Impromptu Speaking
Hans Gabriel Ordas, 2nd Place
Prince Jhulz Reyes, 3rd Place
Eliane Nerisse Pagaduan, 4th Place
Hannah Gabaldon, 5th Place

Humorous Interpretation
Anne Gabriel Arriola, 4th Place
Jonathan Rosh Vivero, 5th Place

Dramatic Interpretation
Hans Gabriel Ordas, 5th Place

Reader's Forum
Eliane Nerisse Pagaduan, 3rd Place
Prince Jhulz Reyes, 4th Place

3-5 DIVISION

Dramatic Interpretation
Jennifer Woo, 1st Place
Tae Hee Kim, 2nd Place

Humorous Interpretation
Moira Grace Ernest, 4th Place

Impromptu Speaking
Moira Grace Ernest, 1st Place
Janus Roman Calayo, 2nd Place
Nestor Ablog Jr., 2nd Place

Readers Forum Masters
Eunice Nicole Pagaduan, 5th Place

See THREE on Next Page

The Thespian regional winners of Grace Christian Academy have their picture taken at the Rev. Raymond S. Kinsella Library Saipan campus. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres

Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog

Happy Easter, Marianas!

With the dawning of a new day always comes a sense of renewal. Every Spring, that renewal comes to us in the form of the Easter holiday.

For many of us, it's a spiritual renewal but one that carries with it great purpose. During the weeks of sacrifice and reflection this Lenten season, we have strived to become better people. As the winds of renewal blow through our islands, we hold on to the hope that what we strived to be during the weeks leading up to Easter will continue to push us to be better people through the rest of the year.

This weekend, we urge all of you to celebrate responsibly and with an open heart. May the Easter spirit be a state of mind that will bless you and your loved ones now and as we move forward as a Commonwealth.

From our families to yours, Happy Easter!

RALPH DLG. TORRES

VICTOR B. HOCOG

THREE

From Page 12

FIRST-SECOND ROUND WINNERS
K-2 DIVISION

Impromptu Speaking Semi Finals A
Prince Jhulz Reyes, 1st Place
Hans Gabriel Ordas, 2nd Place

Impromptu Speaking Semi Finals B
Eliane Nerisse Pagaduan, 1st Place
Llyana Jaira Manalang, 2nd Place

Impromptu Finalists
Prince Jhulz Reyes
Hans Gabriel Ordas
Eliane Nerisse Pagaduan
Llyana Jaira Manalang
Avania Clarise Quichocho
Jonathan Rosh Vivero

Humorous Interpretation Semi Finals A
Jonathan Rosh Vivero, 2nd Place
Anne Gabriel Arriola, 5th Place

Humorous Interpretation Semi Finals B
Aiyana Victory Fatialofa, 5th Place

Humorous Interpretation Finalists
Jonathan Rosh Vivero
Anne Gabriel Arriola
Aiyana Victory Fatialofa

Readers Forum Quarter Finals A
Prince Jhulz Reyes, 2nd Place
Hannah Gabaldon, 3rd Place

Readers Forum Quarter Finals C
Eliane Nerisse Pagaduan, 2nd Place
Llyana Jaira Manalang, 4th Place

Readers Forum Semi Finals A
Prince Jhulz Reyes, 1st Place

Readers Forum Semi Finals B
Hannah Gabaldon, 2nd Place
Eliane Nerisse Pagaduan, 3rd Place

Readers Forum Finalists
Prince Jhulz Reyes
Hannah Gabaldon
Eliane Nerisse Pagaduan

3-5 DIVISION
Impromptu Speaking Semi Finals A
Janus Roman Calayo, 1st Place
Nestor Ablog Jr., 5th Place

Impromptu Speaking Semi Finals B
Eunice Nicole Pagaduan, 1st Place
Jessica Yao Ma, 5th Place

Impromptu Speaking Finalists
Janus Roman Calayo
Nestor Ablog Jr.
Eunice Nicole Pagaduan
Jessica Yao Ma
Moira Grace Ernest

Humorous Interpretation Semi Finals A
Earljean Jonathan Pantaleon, 2nd Place

Humorous Interpretation Semi Finals B
Moira Grace Ernest, 4th Place

Humorous Interpretation Finalists
Moira Grace Ernest
Earljean Jonathan Pantaleon

Dramatic Interpretation Finalists
Arielle Mae Matutino
Justine Yao Ma

Readers Forum Quarter Finals B
Jessica Yao Ma, 2nd Place
Ethan John Quichocho, 4th Place

Grace Christian Academy's 2018 PGFC regional winners have their picture taken at the Rev. Raymond S. Kinsella Library Saipan campus. CONTRIBUTEPHOTO

Readers Forum Quarter Finals D
Tae Hee Kim, 3rd Place
Eunice Nicole Pagaduan, 4th Place
Jennifer Woo, 5th Place

Readers Forum Semi Finals A
Eunice Nicole Pagaduan, 3rd Place

Readers Forum Semi Finals B
Jennifer Woo, 1st Place
Tae Hee Kim, 2nd Place

Readers Forum Finalists
Jennifer Woo
Tae Hee Kim
Eunice Nicole Pagaduan
Jessica Yao Ma

INTERNATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY COMPETITION

Junior Thespian
Solo Musical Theater
Sara Elizabeth Keaton, 5th Place

Senior Thespian
Monologue
Sumin Melody Woo, 1st Place

NJSDA (6TH-8TH GRADE)

FINAL ROUND WINNERS

Extemporaneous Speech
James Alexander Keaton, 2nd Place

The 2018 NSDA regional winners of Grace Christian Academy have their picture taken at the Rev. Raymond S. Kinsella Library Saipan campus. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Anthony Jacob DLG Camacho, 4th Place

Impromptu Speech
Anthony Jacob DLG Camacho, 3rd Place
James Alexander Keaton, 5th Place

Story Telling
Filomenaleonisa Iakopo, 4th Place

Duo Interpretation
Soleil Lamar, 4th Place
Brandie Matsumoto, 4th Place

Chamorro Prose Reading
Anthony Jacob DLG Camacho, 3rd Place

FINALISTS

Duo Interpretation
Kei Lizama
Sara Elizabeth Keaton

Prose Reading
Matthew Gabriel Ernest
Maria Elizabeth Bonto

Chamorro Prose Reading
Hannah Tenorio

SEMI-FINALISTS

Poetry Reading
Matthew Gabriel Ernest
Maria Elizabeth Bonto

Prose Reading
Steven Adriatico

NSDA (9TH-12TH GRADE)

International Extemporaneous Speech
Joshua Pajarillaga, 1st Place
Lanz Jabez Victoria, 3rd Place
Ao Fheng Louis Zheng, 5th Place

US Extemporaneous Speech
Arvin Dayao, 3rd Place
Martin Angelo Pangilinan, 5th Place

Commentary
Joshua Pajarillaga, 1st Place
Lanz Jabez Victoria, 2nd Place
Arvin Dayao, 3rd Place

Dramatic Interpretation A
Sumin Melody Woo, 2nd Place

Original Oratory A
Na Lee Christy Lee, 4th Place

Poetry Reading
Sumin Melody Woo, 1st Place

Prose Reading
Na Lee Christy Lee, 3rd Place

FINALIST
Johnny Jin, Finalist

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

John Bolton. Then what?

President Donald Trump just installed a mini-him as national security adviser. John Bolton, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, take-no-prisoners Fox News talking head, is now at the president's elbow as they confront some of the most corrupt and dangerous regimes in the world. Iran. North Korea. Russia.

Bolton's views are well-known and often mesh with Trump's. On the air and in the op-ed pages, he's argued forcefully that a pre-emptive strike on North Korea is "perfectly legitimate." He has long scoffed at the Iran nuclear deal, as has Trump, and urged the president to tear it up. He wants a tougher stance against Russia's aggressive military and geopolitical actions and policies; Trump has so far been reluctant.

Now Bolton will be front and center in talk—and action—on all fronts. The Iran deal could be history, abrogated by Trump in early May. The president is expected to meet North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un by the end of that month to talk about that country's rogue nuclear program. And Trump says he may parley soon with Russian Strongman-For-Life Vladimir Putin.

We don't know how the addition of Bolton and the subtraction of former national security adviser H.R. McMaster will change the equation. Another variable: CIA Director Mike Pompeo, who is poised to become secretary of state after Trump fired Rex Tillerson.

In sacking Tillerson and McMaster, however, Trump has silenced voices that had tried to mute some of his more bombastic foreign policy instincts, particularly on the Iran nuclear deal. What he'll hear from Bolton presumably will be much closer to what Trump himself has advocated. To what effect? The mercurial Trump reverses course and befuddles friend and foe with often contradictory stances on major issues within hours if not minutes of each other. Where he had voices advising calm, he now has a potential encourager-enabler.

But there's a mantra Trump should invoke when responding to advisers and weighing a case to confront an enemy or aid an ally: Suppose I do that. Then what?

Let's say Trump shreds the Iran deal. Then what? Does that raise or lower prospects that Iran will race to build bombs? What will allies like Great Britain and foes like Russia and China do? Will the U.S. be more or less secure?

Let's say Trump pre-emptively strikes North Korea. Then what? Will the North Koreans attack South Korea, potentially killing hundreds of thousands of civilians? Will they, can they, launch nuclear-tipped missiles toward Chicago and other U.S. cities?

These aren't implausible game-theory scenarios. These are possible real-world repercussions from provocative U.S. diplomatic or military maneuvering.

The U.S. national security adviser can't afford to indulge in let's-do-this-and-see-what-happens bluster. If a U.S. leader makes a threat, draws a red line or takes belligerent action, he'd better anticipate the ripple effects.

Leaders in capitals around the world may or may not believe what Trump—or any president—says. They know that the art of the bluff is part of the art of the deal.

But they do watch how a president changes his roster for clues about what he'll do next. They know John Bolton. And if Americans are wondering how Bolton will influence his boss, so are all those foreign leaders.

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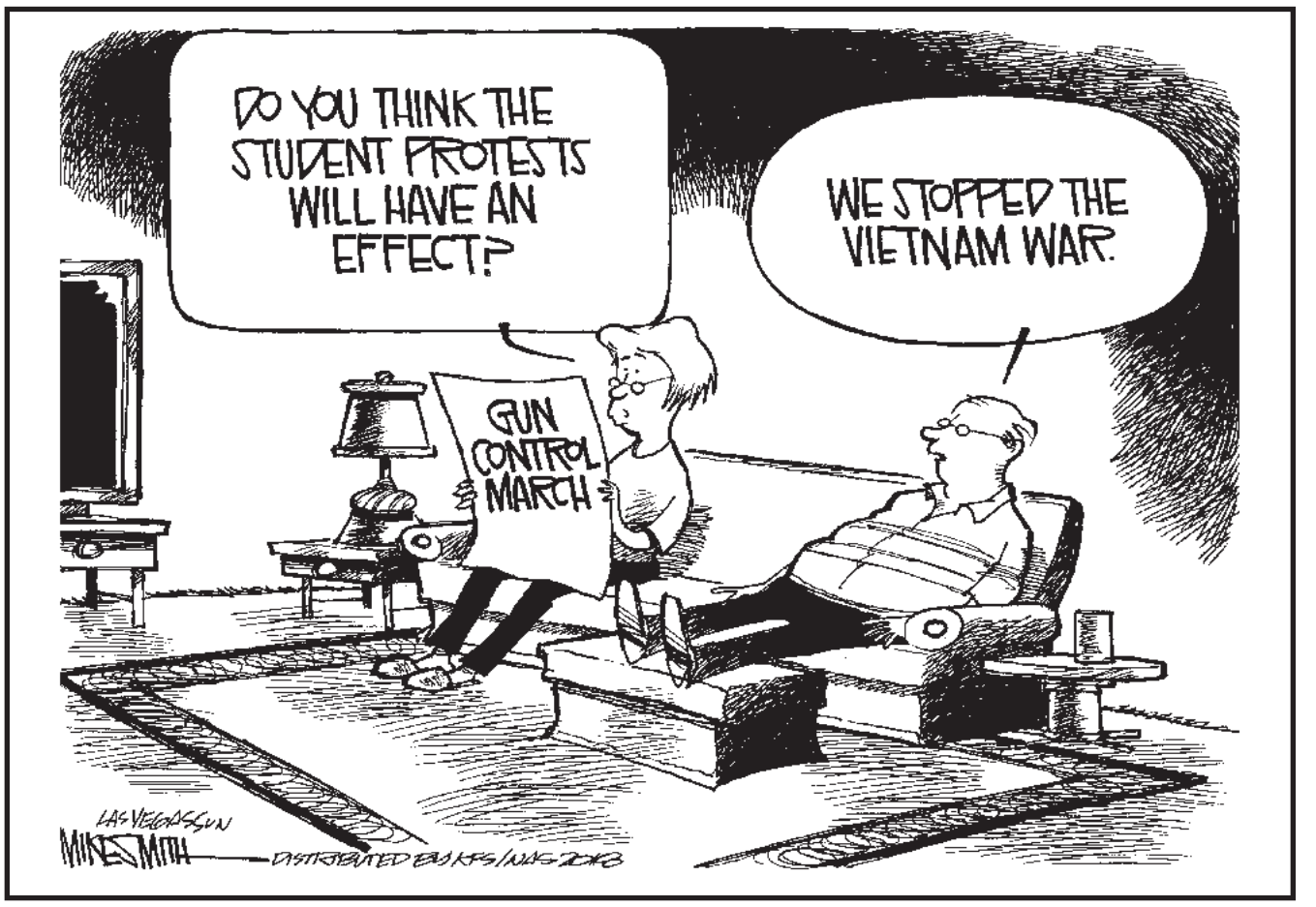

DO YOU THINK THE STUDENT PROTESTS WILL HAVE AN EFFECT?
GUN CONTROL MARCH
WE STOPPED THE VIETNAM WAR.
LAS VEGAS SUN
MIKE SMITH
DISTRIBUTED BY KFS/NAS 2018

It was a bad week for the internet

By VIRGINIA HEFFERNAN
Los Angeles Times

The word "breach" evidently struck terror in the heart of Facebook last week. On March 16, the company brass pressured the Guardian not to use it, threatening to sue, according to a reporter's tweet.

As Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg and his coterie well knew, the U.K. newspaper was readying a dramatic expose that was not exactly going to redound to the glory of Facebook.

Facebook, the world was about to learn, had not just been infested with Russian trolls creating cacophony and discord. It had been undermined by alleged data thieves. What's worse, Facebook had been hospitable to the breach. Even solicitous.

These revelations drew notice even from Americans skeptical of the notion that attacks on the internet represent acts of war. A grass-roots #DeleteFacebook campaign began, which Zuckerberg, usually blase about such things, admitted made him nervous. Alex Stamos, the chief security officer at Facebook, announced he would resign from the company in August, having reportedly been appalled by the company's failures of vigilance. Leaders of two separate congressional committees called on Zuckerberg to testify. In prime time, Zuckerberg offered a halting mea culpa that reassured neither investors nor investigators.

All the while, the deluge.

Evidence has surfaced daily and sometimes hourly this week that the internet is under assault. And not just from the Kremlin, or from corrupt far-right consultancies with unscrupulous methods and shadowy foreign ties. But from nine Iranian hackers tied to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard, whom the Justice Department indicted on Friday for a massive campaign of cyberattacks. According to the indictment, the attacks netted more than 31 terabytes of stolen academic data and intellectual property, the bulk of it from American universities, government agencies and NGOs.

Geoffrey Berman, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, called the indictments "one of the largest state-sponsored hacking campaigns ever prosecuted by the Department of Justice."

That announcement came six days after the initial revelations about Facebook and the wacky and arrogant cloak-and-dagger firm known as Cambridge Analytica. Now notorious for reports of what might be called its customized ethical solutions for political campaigns, Cambridge, which is capitalized by the right-wing Mercer family, is also—as it happens—buddies with John Bolton. Bolton, of course, is the president's brand-new national security advisor, named to the post Thursday.

In 2014, Bolton hired the then-embryonic Cambridge to harvest data, including from tens of millions of—you got it—Facebook profiles.

What a week for the internet.

But back to last weekend. On Saturday, we learned the story of Aleksandr Kogan, a British academic and Facebook collaborator, who harvested personal data from 50 million unconsenting Americans on Facebook four years ago. We also learned that Kogan turned the haul over to Cambridge Analytica.

With vast data caches like that one, Cambridge, its brass later boasted, cinched political victories for charmers like Uhuru Kenyatta, the president of Kenya, and Donald Trump, the president of the United States. Others disagree.

Don't say "breach," Facebook had warned. The Guardian didn't care. "Major data breach," it announced. Facebook's stock price did care. The company lost some $60 billion in market value in the first two days of the week, which is more than Tesla's market cap.

Unlike at the other breached internet firms—Yahoo, Uber, Ashley Madison—we know something about what was done with the 50 million names, "liking" histories, and other intimate info that Cambridge acquired. The flamingo-haired Christopher Wylie, who says he built Cambridge's "psychological warfare tool," told the media the idea was to confuse the hell out of targeted Facebook users—with a view to affecting their behavior and even their votes.

As Wylie put it in an interview on morning TV, Cambridge aimed "to explore mental vulnerabilities of people" and "inject information into different streams or channels of content online, so that people started to see things all over the place that may or may not have been true."

If your head is spinning, that's the point. According to still-breaking news, the data of hundreds of millions of Americans have been exploited. According to the March 22 indictments, intellectual property has been stolen. Our power grids have been threatened (Russian hackers), and by now we ought to know our social media has been choked with disorienting lies optimized to upset us.

The vertigo online is an effect of what information warfare expert Molly McKew calls "data pollution"—pervasive digital noise that can stultify democracy, media and markets.

"We are all getting false signals," journalist Craig Silverman said this month in testimony before the Knight Commission on Trust, Media and Democracy.

"Our human faculties for sense making, and evaluating and validating information, are being challenged and in some ways destroyed."

We're certainly in the thick of false signals and data pollution right now. And maybe, also, the fog of war.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Sweet and sour

By ED STEPHENS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Visit Ed Stephens Jr. at EdStephensJr.com. His column runs every Friday.

"Sweet and sour" is a term that needs little introduction. I'll borrow it from the menu and use it as a dish for the larger feast of life. So pull up a beach chair, pop open a cold one, and let's get philosophical about things.

The nifty thing about sweet and sour, of course, is that the right combination of opposite things results in a savory experience. My long-term goal has been to enjoy two very compelling, but opposite, notions. One is action and adventure. The other is peace and quiet.

This was Saipan's big draw. Before I even heard of the place the call of adventure had taken me to Pago Pago, French Polynesia, and Panama; I was a pilot and a seafarer. That was great, but I eventually longed for a slice of the other end of a spectrum, a tranquil place with American-style creature comforts. A peaceful nook on Saipan was just the thing.

I wasn't the only one with that outlook. Though I also did business on the ground and opened an office soon after my arrival, most of my new friends were pilots and mariners. Some of the mariners had arrived on Saipan after single-handedly sailing boats across the Pacific. They understood the notions of adventure and of peace. So, too, did various professionals who found tropical life to be more fulfilling than living under the gray blanket of the "real world."

This wasn't the only outlook that drew outsiders to the island, though. Loot from the local political syndicates drew a separate species of outsiders.

True, the two groups of outsiders were sometimes an uneasy mix, but that was only sometimes. It was obvious which camp would prevail. The inevitability of the outcome proved the futility of contention. Even temporary harmony is still harmony, so there was no incentive to rock the boat.

Eventually, one by one, the anchors were weighed. Sails were hoisted. Offices were closed. Props were turned and rotors were, too. Insurance agents scrubbed "Saipan" off of paperwork and put in new places.

Those places were Guam, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and Indonesia, to name a few spots where my pals landed. While Saipan ceased to be viable for most people outside of the political structure, the exodus served to create a broadening network of colleagues.

The network had new places and new stories of new adventures. These tales would reach the rest of us in drips and drabs, sometimes taking years to filter through the grapevine.

It's still happening. For example, it just came to my attention that an aircraft with a storied history on Saipan has been sold for parts. To most people, that's not a meaningful thing. But to any pilot or any mariner, the death of a worthy vessel is, just that, an actual death.

I went through my photo album and tallied eight aircraft (four airplanes and four helicopters) that I piloted in the CNMI that are gone now.

As the years go by, the more my balance shifts toward the peace and quiet end of the spectrum. Less material goes into the photo album. More time goes into reading it from an armchair. Well, that's the long-wave trajectory, at least. Shorter terms can zig and zag all over the place. Even if you don't welcome all the changes when they come along, the alternative is to spend your life under the gray blanket.

And so, while, for example, being seasick during a typhoon in remote Pacific waters is a miserable way to spend a night, looking back on a life where you didn't do that might be even less appealing. Bad times can make for the best stories.

Eventually, those stories aren't mere stories. They are YOU.

That's obvious, sure, but the gray blanket never quits. The comforts of modern life make the rigors of adventure seem anachronistic, unappealing, and unnecessary. After all, the electronic media offer a vicarious substitute.

And here we find a strange phenomenon: The buzzing electric bubble not only serves as a substitute for the discomforts and risks of adventure, but, in doing so, it also displaces the notion of true peace and quiet. Clinging to vicariousness means being cemented to the distractions that comprise it.

This behavior has been noted for a long time. In 1985 a book titled *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, by Neil Postman, addressed the notion. Keep in mind that's back when mere TV was the high-tech thing. It's before the Web and smartphones were part of life, not to mention the actual core of life for so many people.

I'll note it, but I sure won't bemoan it, and, in fact, I'm thankful for it. The routines of the modern economy require a lot of people who, well, who do what modern people do.

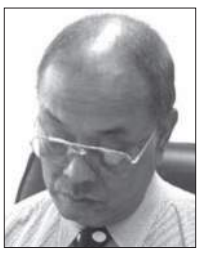
As for myself, though, I'll take the sweet and sour instead. I know that many readers, be they near or far, feel the same way. After all, nothing can rival swapping wayfaring tales from the quiet perch of a snug harbor.

That is, in fact, one routine that just gets better with age. So, cool story, bro. Tell it again.

The culture of corruption

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the* Saipan Tribune.



An informed friend whispered I should keep my ears to the ground to hear the culture of corruption on the islands. Heard a myriad of them like pollen in the air. But I'd defer to investigative professionals first in the interest of justice.

Or did I miss smelling the stench beyond pungent they've sniffed in recent past? We shall hear about it soon when folks begin visiting the confessional near fishing base.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines corruption as "dishonest or illegal behavior especially by powerful people (such as government officials….)"

Acts of corruption usually involves conflict of interest, bribery, cronyism, nepotism, sinecures—jobs with salaries but no duties; and fraud. With this, it doesn't take rocket science to reasonably figure out what may be coming down the pike.

Sensitivity skips collusion momentarily, focusing on the 80-percent salary hike against the 14,000 employees earning poverty and below income levels. Did you help any of them improve family buying power they could use when they go to grocery stores?

The Bloomberg piece has turned mouthwash everywhere. How do you convince ordinary folks otherwise? If you put the dots together, are you anywhere near the truth?

Sure, people skipped under the 80 percent legislative largess have turned acid critics fuming at politicians padding their pockets ignoring them in the process. This omission is hard to dismiss or forget.

Interesting how the new "corruption, and the unaccountability that is its signature feature" has seemingly sprouted, grown and bloomed here since recent past.

Example: A good case of the culture of unaccountability is the $400,000 engineered by Biktot Hokog for the MV *Luta* run by the Mendiola family. Its expropriation was by resolution, avoiding constitutional requirement of "legislative appropriation." Illegal!

Appalling that the Legislature hasn't even lifted a finger to guard its authority on appropriation nor has the governor instructed his lieutenant to return the funds.

Do we ignore collecting what's owed taxpayers, the work of an evil genius that has no regard for the rule of law? Walk it people and get to learn what really is the fiscal posture of the NMI. Evidently, Christmas comes only once a year!

Alternative: I'm still a believer in giving the multitude choices among candidates fielded by both Republicans and Democrats. It's about choice and each must work the clock to provide voters who it feels are best poised to represent "we the people" in the public domain.

It's time to begin placing fiscally responsible folks who understand the essence of a solvent NMI government. Must critically look into old debts, current deficit and obligations versus revenue generation. It's good to know the fiscal posture of the NMI. Let's not emulate Guahan's GMH where vendors refuse sending it vital medication. I have sympathy, though, for Calvo's round-the-clock effort to make up the $85.7 million shortfall resulting from Trump's tax cuts.

Powerless: I have seen the filthy tentacles of corruption. Sadly, I was relegated to my corner of humility, adversely affected by the loss of trust and hope in the future of the islands. I ran up against politicians marching to the Disneyland of Greed.

My focus was to have the elected elite embrace trust and hope in their dispositions so that "we the people" can own our dreams of brighter tomorrows. That trip to the mound was reduced to dirt! Wary that they aren't listening, it was time to exit. I had to resign and I did.

What a waste dimming the lights of trust and hope that would have lit up the blue skies of paradise at the pinnacle of their career. It wasn't to be. They were ousted by fate. Gone permanently into the sunset! Never again!

Deceit: The ill-fated disposition of issues by politicians would dominate the center of discussion this election year. At any rate, politicians associated with either issue—alleged collusion or the 80-percent salary hike—have placed self-inflicted hurdles at their own peril. No easy feat clearing the air.

Would you ably find persuasive explanation increasing your salary by 80 percent while more than 14,000 employees are under poverty income level and below?

The federal income level for a family of two is $16,640 per year. An 80-percent increase pans out to $13,312 for a total of $29,952 per year. Family of four: $25,100 and an 80-percent increase totals $45,180 per year. A family of six it's $33,740 per year; a hefty 80 percent should give the family about $60,732 per year.

Legislators are still ahead by $10,368 with the new annual salary of $71,100 per year. Talk about padding their wallets when we all went to sleep one fine evening.

Collusion: There's a more blatant form of collusion that pales the Russian attempt to interfere in the U.S. election of 2016. Remember some four years ago when a certain firm here paid CUC $10 million to pay the utility bills of consumers?

Isn't this the epitome of corruption and is the firm preparing to repeat the same generosity? Heard rumors, too, that some folks are going around passing out more money to voters. Would you like to stop by my house? I need something quick like $4,500 for an urgent need. Coming?

Ooops! The cost or price of medication and vitamins has increased upwards of a dollar to six dollars recently. Bad news for 14,000 employees with poverty and below income levels and those with fixed income, like retirees.

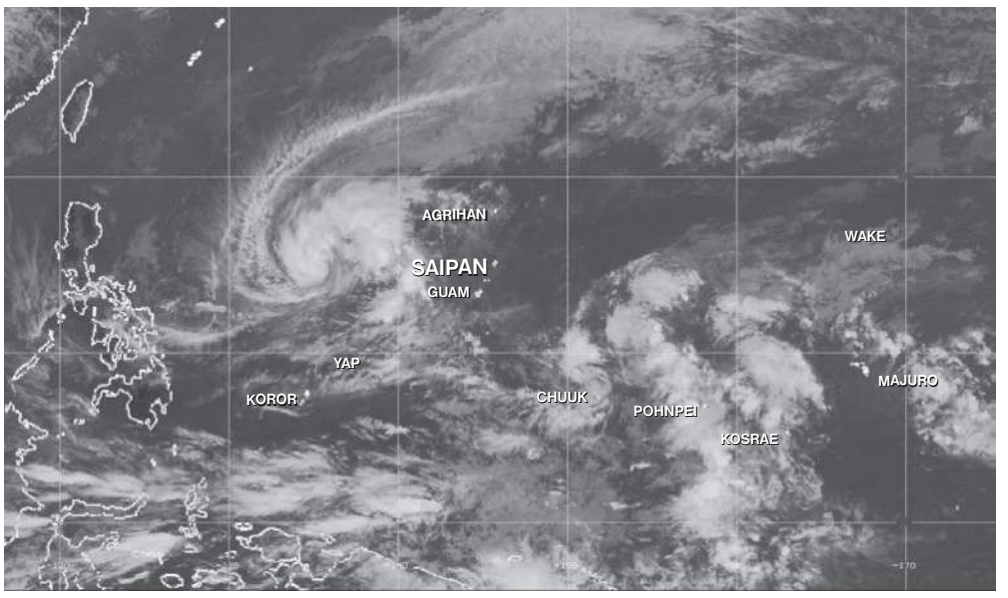
Vendors need to remember that the 80-percent salary increase is limited to legislators. You could charge them more but be mindful of the 14,000 employees still languishing in poverty and below income levels. It's also heavy for retirees' fixed income!

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. Southeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. South winds 5 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲88° ▼76°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 5:25 AM, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2018
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Tropical Storm Jelawat is spinning well west of the Marianas, and is centered near 16N135E. It is not directly affecting the islands at this point, but showers and thunderstorms have developed southeast of Jelawat near and north of Yap, moving east. Meanwhile, there is quite a bit of cloudiness areound the region, but only isolated showers, mainly in the Guam coastal waters. Winds have turned to southeast and have diminished to moderate. Seas have also diminished from yesterday, and are 5-6 feet at the buoys.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	87° / 77°
Palau	Thunderstorm	86° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorm	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	87° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorm	84° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	84° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorm	84° / 79°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Showers	73° / 63°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	75° / 46°
Hong Kong	Sunny	77° / 70°
Honolulu	Sunny	83° / 70°
London	Showers	48° / 39°
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	81° / 57°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	91° / 75°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	73° / 52°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	78° / 71°
New York	Rain	63° / 41°
Osaka	Sunny	64° / 48°
Paris	Rain	54° / 36°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	63° / 52°
Rome	Rain	66° / 55°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	73° / 45°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	65° / 51°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	64° / 46°
Tokyo	Sunny	61° / 48°
Washington, DC	Showers	61° / 42°

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
12:45 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.06
7:12 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.99
1:20 PM	LOW TIDE	0.58
6:54 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.94

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:14 AM	6:29 PM
Saturday	6:13 AM	6:29 PM
Sunday	6:12 AM	6:29 PM
Monday	6:12 AM	6:29 PM
Tuesday	6:11 AM	6:29 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	5:12 am	5:24 pm
Saturday	-	5:57 am	6:19 pm
Sunday	-	6:41 am	7:13 pm
Monday	-	7:23 am	8:06 pm
Tuesday	-	8:06 am	8:58 pm

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 19, 2017

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA6394	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA6392	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA6391	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA6390	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA6398	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA6396	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA6391	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA6391	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:15pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:10am	6:10am	1, 7
7C3451	4:00am	7:05am	4, 5

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

TW308	2:00am	6:05am	Daily
OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
LJ652	3:40am	7:30am	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403	4:45am	8:30am	Daily
7C3401	4:00pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	5:40am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)

JD396	7:30am	12:00pm	1
JD396	4:50pm	10:00pm	4

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	10:55am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	10:55am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6394/191	4:15am	9:00am	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	8:10am	7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via GUM
UA6398/183	6:05pm	9:40pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA6398/183	6:05pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6398/193	6:05pm	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX077	1:50am	5:15am	1, 4
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UO43	5:45am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7
UA6398/159	6:05pm	11:00pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA6393	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA6395	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA6391	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA6390	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA6397	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA6399	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA6390	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA6390	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:30am	3:05pm	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:00pm	2:10am+1	4
7C3452	9:05pm	2:10am+1	3, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	9:30am	3:00pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
TW307	7:45pm	1:00am+1	Daily
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
LJ651	9:10pm	2:40am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:20pm	4:30am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN

JD395	8:25am	3:30pm	4
JD395	9:55pm	5:00am+1	7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:25pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA182/6395	12:40am	8:05am	3, 6 via GUM
UA190/6397	9:55am	5:35pm	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:25pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:25pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/UA6395	10:05pm	8:05am+1	Daily via GUM
UA192/6395	10:30pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via ROR-GUM
UA184/6395	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
HX076	5:15pm	12:15am+1	3, 7
UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6
UA116/6395	11:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, LJ Jin Air, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, PR PAL Express; ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The* Saipan Tribune *is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

Judiciary meets with Legislature

Senate President Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan) and House Speaker Rafael S. Demapan (R-Saipan) met with members of the CNMI Judiciary on Wednesday, March 28, 2018, to discuss possible funding to replace the air conditioning system and remove and remediate the mold problem facing the Guma Hustisia.

Palacios and Demapan indicated they will work with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres to provide immediate funding so that the Guma Hustisia can be reopened to court staff and the public.

The building has been closed since March 16.

"The Judiciary appreciates the support and assistance of both the Executive and Legislative Branches with securing funding to address the Guma' Hustisia's air-conditioning system and mold remediation," said Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro. "Mold assessment is currently ongoing, but additional funding is necessary to address mold removal and remediation."

Director of Courts Sonia A. Camacho said, "It is recommended that we replace the air conditioning system with a newly manufactured one to fit the needs of the Guma Hustisia. The replacement will take some time as it will need to be ordered and shipped to Saipan."

Capital Improvement Project administrator Elizabeth S. Balajadia and technical analyst Leona DLG Sablan, who also attended the meeting, have been assisting the Judiciary on the mold remediation project.

Although the Guma Hustisia remains closed to the public, court operations have resumed with services provided at alternate locations. Court business will be conducted at these alternate locations until the air-conditioning system is fully restored and mold assessment and remediation has been completed.

Court schedule and notices are posted on the Judiciary website (www.justice.gov.mp), Facebook (CNMI Judiciary), and Instagram (@cnmijudiciary). ***(PR)***

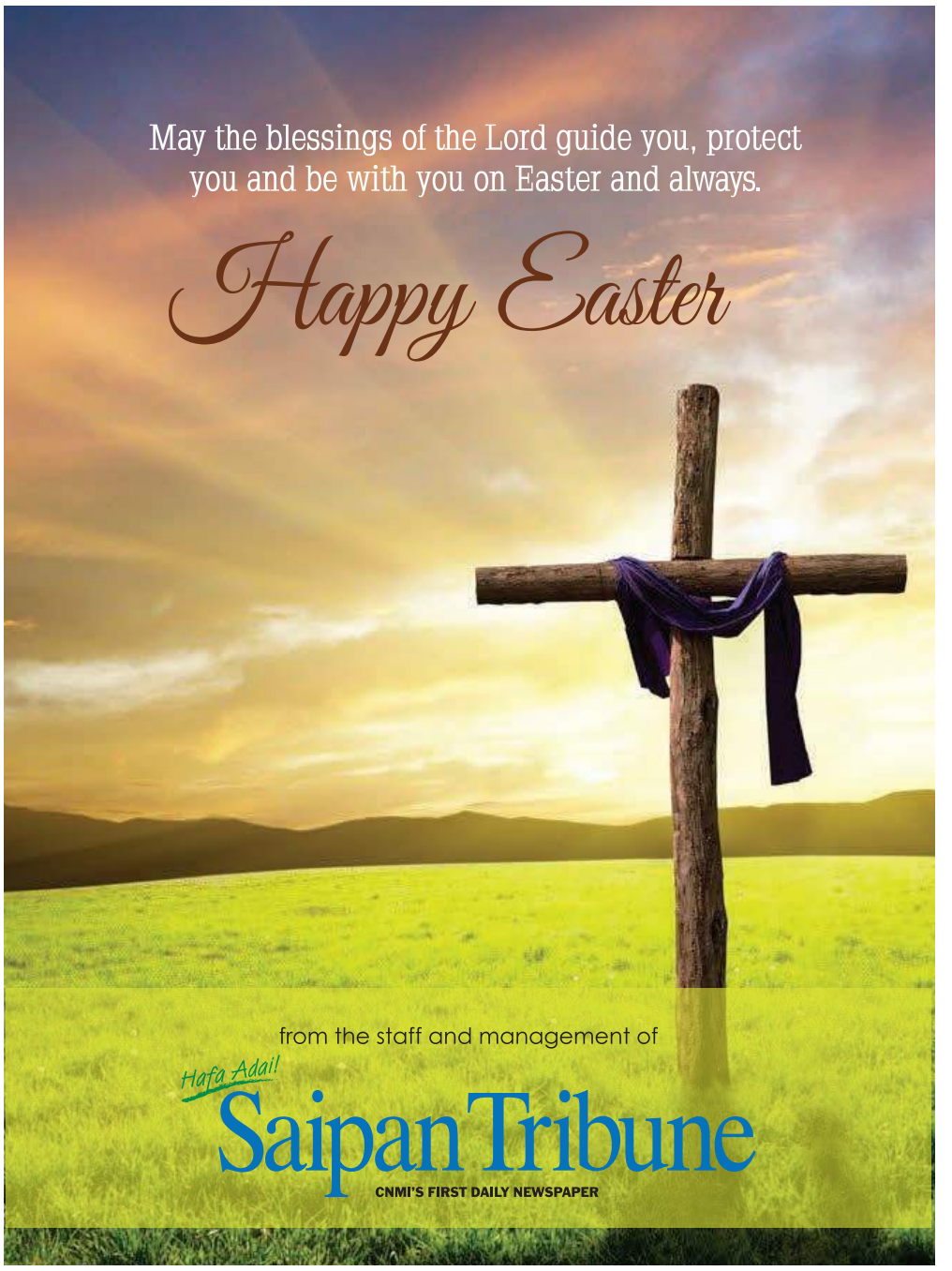
BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Happy 21st birthday to Jerome Manuel Montano Ortiguerra, who will be celebrating his special day on April 1, 2018! We wish you all the best and happiness in life. We love you! Greetings come from the family.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Rejoice for the Savior of the world has risen.
May the Lord bless your home with happiness
and unwavering faith this Easter.
Have a Blessed Easter
From the management and staff of
Tan Holdings
www.tanholdings.com
HEALTH IS WEALTH
Tan Siu Lin Foundation

May you find the renewal
of hope, health, love
and the spirit of God.
Happy Easter
to you and
your family!
From the management and staff of
J.E.T. HOLDINGS COMPANY
DBA's
Saipan Bowling Center • Commercial Building & House Rental
Consulting Services & Rental Estates
J's Restaurant I-San Jose • J's Restaurant II-Gualo Rai
P.O. Box 29, Saipan MP 96950 • Tel. 235-8641 • Fax 235-9033
Middle Road,
Gualo Rai
Tel. 235-8640
Beach Road,
San Jose
Tel. 234-6420
Unlimited expressions for lasting impression
For Fresh Flowers, Silk Arrangement and Gift Basket Arrangement
Please visit Blossoms Floral Depot or call 235-7372/235-2276


May the blessings of the Lord guide you, protect
you and be with you on Easter and always.
Happy Easter
from the staff and management of
Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

NMI Museum of History & Culture– Chamorro and Carolinian Center

The NMI Museum of History and Culture will be establishing a Chamorro and Carolinian Cultural Center within our grounds to hopefully assist the museum in generating revenue. Shown here is the proposed schematic plans outlining how we plan to construct temporary huts along our grounds for interested vendors to educate, demonstrate, display, sell local Chamorro and Carolinian products.

New Landscaping: Royal Palm and Silver Palm

Donated Containers IT&E and Saipan Shipping

Products ranging from coconut woven baskets, coconut oil, tuba, rope making, local healing medicine, local food, and cultural dancing are some of the possible things that tourists and residents can expect to see and experience in our grounds.

Included in the plans, is for a fence similar to one built at the Commonwealth Health Center to be constructed to protect the huts from vandalism and also to properly collect our admission fee at the entrance from visitors entering the grounds.

Will this be similar to the Thursday night Street Market? NO. We plan focus on Chamorro and Carolinian products and the museum board will screen proposals from potential vendors. All vendors must comply with the Chamorro and Carolinian themed requirements.

Aquino said that he plans to have anywhere from 10 to 15 huts constructed and they plan to open once or twice a week and as more tourist or tour groups request for visits they will increase the frequency of days they open. He stated, that there is a need for this and the inspiration came from one Japanese tour executive who asked if there was a place that tourist can experience eating local food or looking at traditional local products.

Preliminary discussions have begun with the Marianas Visitors Authority, the Secretary of DCCA, Indigenous Affairs Office, Carolinian Affairs Office, and Mr. Gordon Marciano who have all expressed optimism and interest with this proposed plan.

We will continue to discuss this further and open up a dialogue with all major tour companies as well as the hotel association to ensure that we gain the support needed to make this program a success.

Aquino, recently asked and dropped of written requests to the members of the legislature for supplemental funding to assist the museum with the ground works for this project and other important projects that were still pending such as the additional storage spaces and the renovation of the old laboratory building for our gift shop and coffee shop.

He added that, the museum grounds are currently being upgraded and undergoing landscaping. New Royal and Silver Palm trees have been planted and we intend to continue to improve the grounds landscaping for the purpose of renting the grounds for events such as weddings, parties, corporate events to name a few on non-event days.

The NMI Museum of History and Culture was established pursuant to the Commonwealth Museum Act (2 CMC 4871-4883) as a public corporation, governed by the Board of Governors. The museum is an independent program of the Governor's Office and receives funding through government appropriations, grants, donations, and museum sales which are then deposited into the Commonwealth Museum Revolving Fund.

Over the years, the funding received was not enough to provide for the adequate operations and maintenance of the museum. This of course, was the main factor why the museum was not fully operational for more than 3 years and why the condition of the museum, its artifacts, exhibits were in a depressed and at risk state before I came on board.

Aquino is optimistic, that the legislature will assist the museum with the funding it still needs. He stressed that the museum would not be where it is without the valuable contributions from outstanding individuals, government agencies and companies that he personally would like to acknowledge. He attributes his successes from everyone who has made the museum their concern.

Aquino, thanked Governor Torres for his continued support, and confidence in him to serve as Executive Director of the NMI Museum. He gave special thanks to the Chairman of the Board (John Gonzales) and the members of the board for their confidence and support in him and the plans that they have laid out for the recovery of the museum.

Aquino recognized and thanked Speaker Ralph Demapan, SNIL Chairman JP Sablan, and Ways and Means Chairman Angel Demapan for their continued pledge and commitment assisting the museum with the continued funding it needed to complete critical repairs and projects.

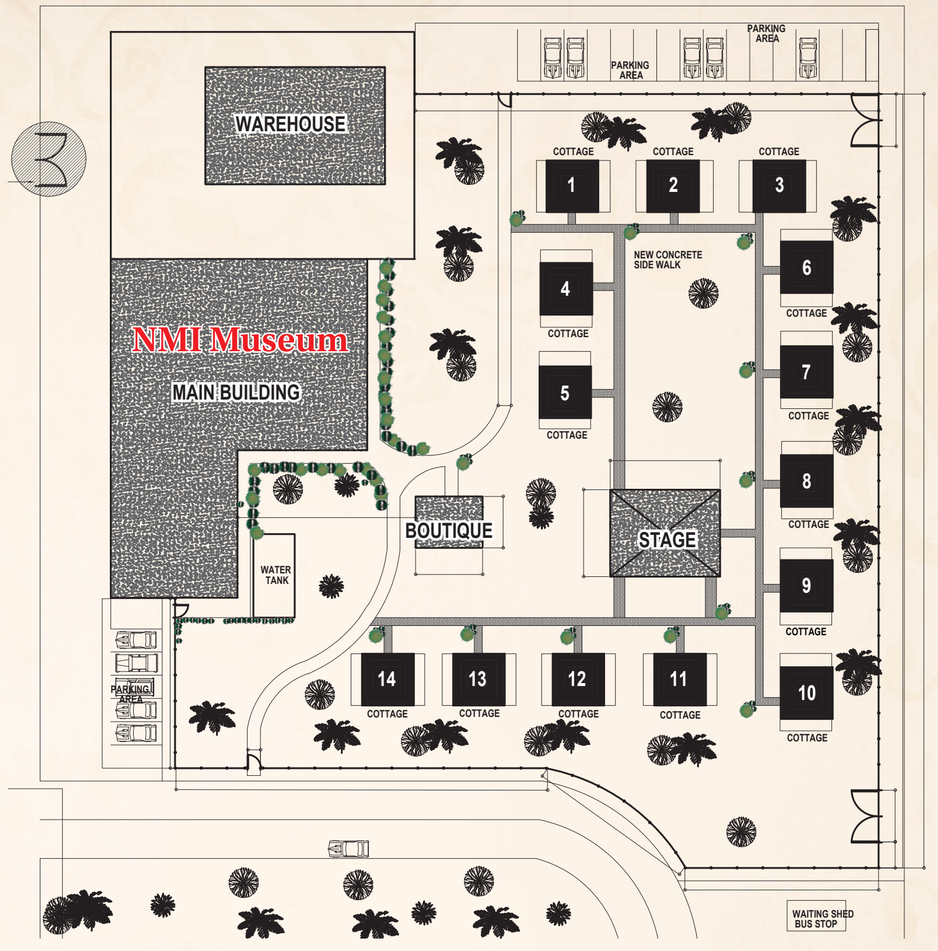
He expressed his sincere appreciation to Mr. Chris Concepcion, Ms. Tatiana Babauta and board of MVA for the grant that assisted the museum with the initial funding that completed the major repairs on museum roof.

Executive Director Aquino gave special thanks to Mr. Ricky Delgado, Rose Soledad and the IT&E team for the central air-conditioning and cooling units, the container that they converted for storage, as well as contribution of phone, fax line and internet as well as all other major contributions they have extended the museum. He acknowledged the following companies for their generous donation of a container that they use as a storage space: Saipan Shipping, Saipan Stevedore and CMS.

He thanked the Saipan Mayor's Office for their assistance in cutting all the sick trees in our grounds and the debris removal. Also, in his list of thanks and appreciation were the government agencies that he felt worked tirelessly behind the scenes: Secretary of Finance, Director of Finance, Treasurer, and Procurement Director and all the respective staff for all their efforts in ensuring timely payments to all of their vendors.

He lastly commended and thanked his staff of three: Jimmy Macaranas, Allan Lifoifoi and Wenny Haruo for their support, patience, dedication and hard work. He recognized the eagerness of residents and students who have been patient and understanding. From November 2017 till March 2018 the museum has had close to 650 visitors.

For anyone interested in visiting the museum or have any questions, please call 664-2160.



Landscaping and New Royal Palm Trees

Office Converted to Storage: Concepcion Vases

New Storage: Ancient Chamorro and Carolinian Remains

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-18-003

LOWER BASE SEWER PHASE 1 – LIFT STATION AND FORCEMAIN

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Lower Base Sewer Phase 1 – Lift Station and Forcemain in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This work consists of new installation of a lift station and forcemain, a new generator building, new and tapping into the existing forcemain. The work also includes the installation of air relief valves, gate valves, and asphalt pavement restoration, etc. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications. CUC requires the Project to be completed in **300 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Economic Development Authority (USEDA) and the Department of Interior (USDOI). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEDA and USDOI.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **April 10th, 2018 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building. Prospective Bidders are mandated to attend the Pre-Bid Conference and Site Visit.

One (1) Original and Five (5) Hard Copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-IFB-18-003, Lower Base Sewer Phase 1- Lift Station and Forcemain"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on May 2nd, 2018**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment* Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on April 18th, 2018** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Christie L. Sablan, CUC P&S, Purchasing Assistant via email christie.sablan@cugov.org and to Travis Spaeth, CUC Project Engineer via email address travis.spaeth@cucgov.org .

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY(CPA)
CNMI GOVERNMENT
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950 • Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

AMENDED NOTICE
NOTICE TO BIDDERS

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA) is inviting qualified bidders to submit their bids for the **FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT EIGHT (8) A/C UNIT REPLACEMENT, PROJECT NO. CPA-SA-004-18.**

Sealed bids will be received at the office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, at Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, at **2:00 PM, THURSDAY, APRIL 5TH, 2018**, at which time and place the sealed bids will be publicly opened and read.

The Project, in general, consists of replacement of eight (8) air-conditioning units located at the Saipan International Air Terminals. Procurement includes removal and disposal of existing units scheduled for replacement.

The Project is being funded by Commonwealth Ports Authority. The contract award, if it is to be made, will be made within sixty (60) calendar days from the receipt of bids. CPA reserves the right to hold such bids in effect for ninety (90) calendar days from the date of bid opening.

The contract period for installation of eight units shall be **TWO HUNDRED TEN (210) CALENDAR DAYS**. Liquidated damages shall be imposed in the amount of **FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS ($500.00)** per day if the commissioning of the A/C units is delayed beyond the contract time without excuse.

The apparent low bidder may be subject to a thorough and comprehensive review of its Bid Documents to ensure that they are "responsive and responsible." This review will include, but is not necessarily limited to previous project experience, financial capabilities, quality of equipment and personnel, and bonding and insurance. If the apparent low bidder is found not to be "responsive or responsible", their bid will be rejected and the next lowest bidder will be evaluated for qualifications.

All mechanics and laborers on the project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate established by the CNMI or the U.S. Secretary of Labor, whichever is higher. A copy of the Department of the Federal Labor Wage Rate Determination is included in Section 70-26 of the specifications. The Contractor shall take into account minimum wage increases that may be imposed in the CNMI over the life of the Contract.

Each bidder must complete, sign, and furnish the "Non-Collusive Affidavit" and "Designation of Subcontractors" as contained in the bid documents, with the submission of the Bid.

Bids and contract documents including specifications may be obtained at the Accounting Department Office, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, beginning February 23, 2018 upon the payment of **FIFTY DOLLARS ($50.00)** for each set of documents in electronic form (CD) including the bid schedule. This payment is nonrefundable. Payment shall be made in cash, cashier's check or U.S. postal money order payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

There is no pre-bid conference for this project. Bidders will be responsible for scheduling a site inspection with CPA.

Questions should be submitted to the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, in writing, at least seven (7) days prior to the bid opening.

Each bid shall be on a form furnished by the Commonwealth Ports Authority. The bidders are encouraged to use the CD bid schedule form. The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Notice to Bidders; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; (c) any calculation error made in the bid schedule or misenter the quantity of line item; or (d) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

Each bidder must supply all information required by the bid documents and specifications.

The EEO requirements, labor provisions, and wage rates are included in the specifications, and bid documents are available for inspection at the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

Each bid shall be accompanied by either bid bond from a CPA approved listed surety company, a certified check or a cashier's check in the amount not less than **ten percent (10%)** of the bid price. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY:
/s/ EDWARD B. MENDIOLA
Acting Executive Director
Date: March 20, 2018

Rotary redirects exchange program

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Rotary Club of Saipan will welcome its last batch of exchange students from Tokyo, Hachiko Yoshi South this Sunday.

At the Rotary Club of Saipan meeting at the Hyatt Regency Saipan's Giovanni Restaurant last Tuesday, Rotary president-elect Greg Borja said the club will be receiving the last two Rotary Interact students from the Rotary Club of Tokyo Hachiko Yoshi South. That is, except if the Saipan club renews the program with the Tokyo club.

In its place, Borja said the Rotary Club of Saipan has already established an exchange program with the Rotary Club of Guam.

This Sunday, April 1, two students from the Interact Club in Tokyo Hachiko Yoshi South will arrive on Saipan and will stay for six days.

Borja said the students will be set up with the other Interact club here on Saipan. The Interact is the Rotary Club's youth program.

"We are working with students in [the local] Interact Club to basically be goodwill ambassadors. They'll bring them to the schools and they'll share classes with them while they're here to give them an experience of going to school here on Saipan," he said.

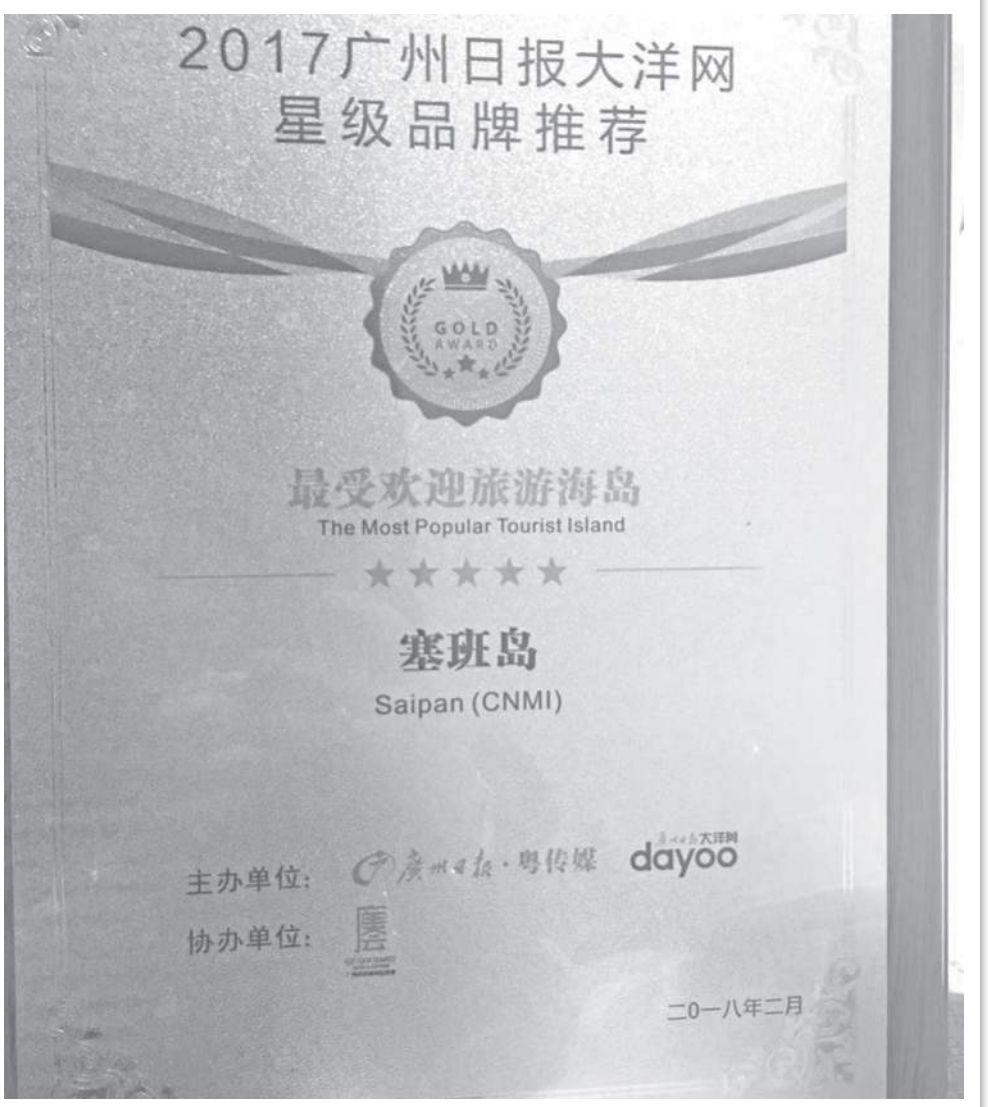
The students will spend one day at the Saipan International School, one day at Marianas High School, one day at Kagman High School, and one day at Saipan Southern High School.

"We also have some plans to have some sightseeing with the students," he said.

Borja said the exchange program is intended to give students from other Rotary clubs a sense of the Saipan culture.

According to Borja, this is the third exchange that the Rotary Club of Saipan has had with the Rotary Club of Hachiko Yoshi South.

MOST POPULAR DESTINATION MVA
The Most Popular Island Award is given to Saipan at *Guangzhou Daily Star* Brand Recommendation anniversary on March 7, 2018, in Guangzhou, China. Ben Liu, marketing manager from the MVA's China office, third from the right, accepts the award.



The Most Popular Island Award is given to Saipan at the *Guangzhou Daily Star* Brand Recommendation anniversary on March 7, 2018, in Guangzhou, China. *Guangzhou Daily Star* is the No. 1 newspaper in southern China. MVA

TanHoldings marks EARTH HOUR

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gamil.com
CORRESPONDENT

TanHoldings Corp. and its many divisions, called Strategic Business Units (SBU), joined the rest of the world in commemorating Earth Hour last Saturday, March 24, from 8:30pm to 9:30pm.

Earth Hour, which originated in Sydney, Australia in 2007, is held every year since. It is TanHoldings' way of connecting and working with everyone to take action on climate change and to find ways to protect and nurture Mother Earth.

As part of this annual practice, TanHoldings and its SBU heads, employees, and their families turned off non-essential lights for one whole hour, whether they were in the place of work or at home.

Even at a hotel where utilities are expected to work 24/7 for its guests, Kanoa Resort director of operations Glenn Policare said they cannot let this opportunity pass.

"To the best of my knowledge, Kanoa Resort has been participating ever since TanHoldings purchased the property in 2005. For a resort, we can make a sizeable impact on energy saving while showing our guests that we are conscious of the importance of the preservation of our precious Earth," he said

That meant having the Isla Terrace, Barefoot Bar, and Nami Bar adorned in candlelight. The resort's front desk was lit by lanterns and the lobby was candlelit for the weekend food fair.

Policare said this activity is not only good within TanHoldings but also a good example for other companies to follow.

TanHoldings also considers Earth Hour a family activity, said engineering manager Mario Mayuga.

He pointed out that TanHoldings participates by encouraging not just its affiliates but all employees with their families to participate in Earth Hour.

Mayuga's department plays a very important role in the monitoring and turning off of non-essential electric lights for one hour for the different apartment locations and commercial buildings like TSL Plaza and JP Center.

"Although we do not measure the number of [kilowatt-hours] saved, we believe we share in our little way," he said. "We start our preparations at least a day before the event on March 24 as we reprogram all non-essential lights to go off by 8:30pm and back on by 9:30pm. The impact is big, even by turning off lights for just a short one hour."

For Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, it is the hotel's way of being a part of the world's effort to conserve resources and be aware of climate change.

The hotel did its share by turning off lights at the lobby and common areas. Some guests at the hotel voluntarily participated in the event by also turning off the lights in their rooms for one hour, said Public and Employees Relations manager Elena Sol.

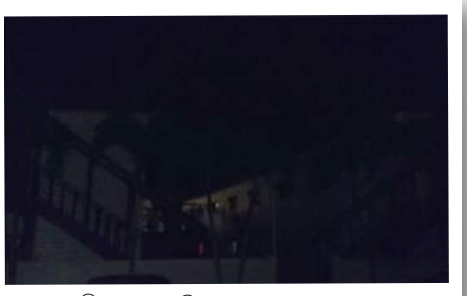
Lina Dimaano, TanHoldings vice president for Finance, marked the event with her family at home also in support of World Wildlife Fund's movement to urgently reduce the emissions that drive climate change and create a future where people and nature thrive.

"We joined Earth Hour by setting up a table at the garden outside our apartment. Turning the light off for an hour not only helps the planet but it was also a way for us to be together, stripped of any gadgets and distractions and just be one whole family trying to do our share to take care of the environment," she said.

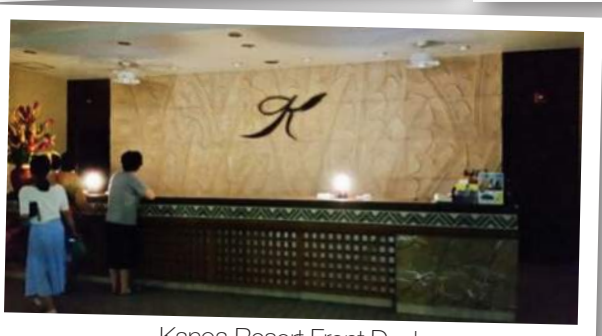
"Everything was simple and meaningful. …With only candles lighting our sight, we played Mexican Train. In fact, we connected with a new neighbor, who arrived on island barely a month [ago] and he joined in our game during the switch off and even after Earth Hour," she added.

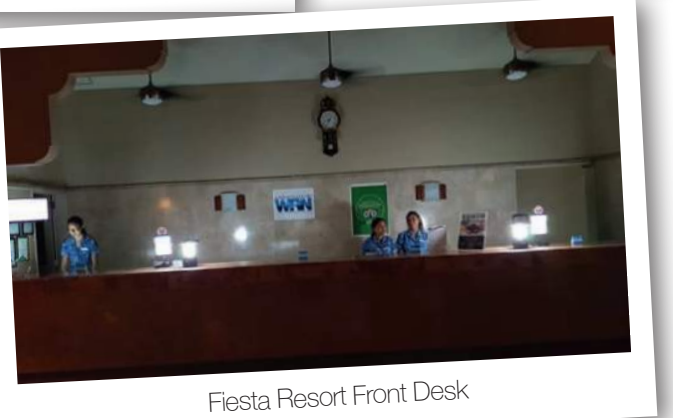
Aside from observing Earth Hour, TanHoldings employees and officials also organize and participate in beach cleanups, tree planting, and recycling.

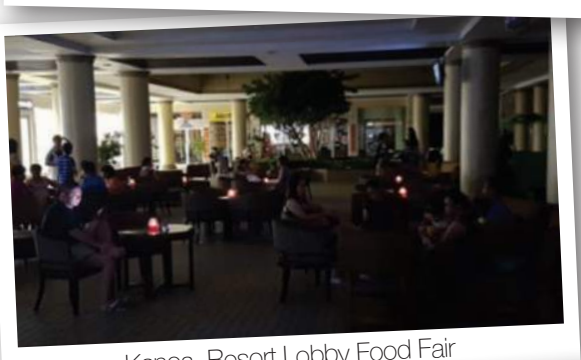
Kanoa Barefoot Bar


Garapan Courtyard Apartment

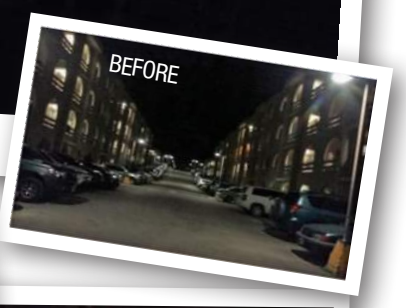
Fiesta Resort Staff House

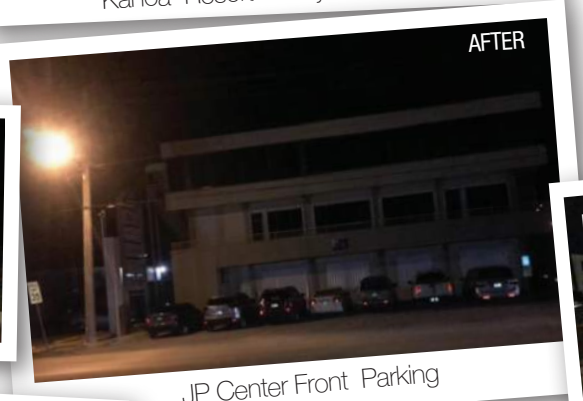

Kanoa Resort Front Desk


Fiesta Resort Front Desk

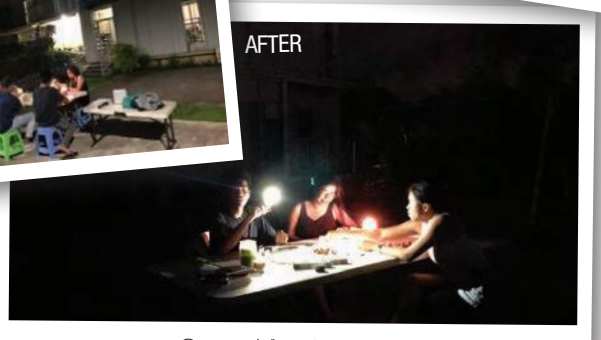

Kanoa Resort Lobby Food Fair

Finasisu Terrace

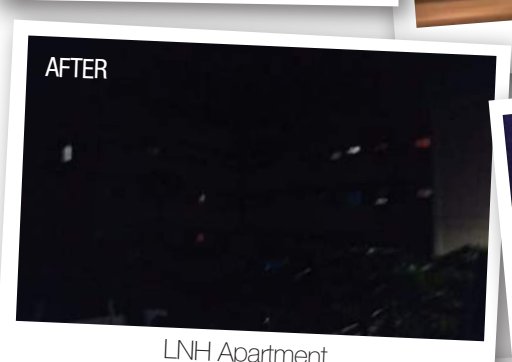




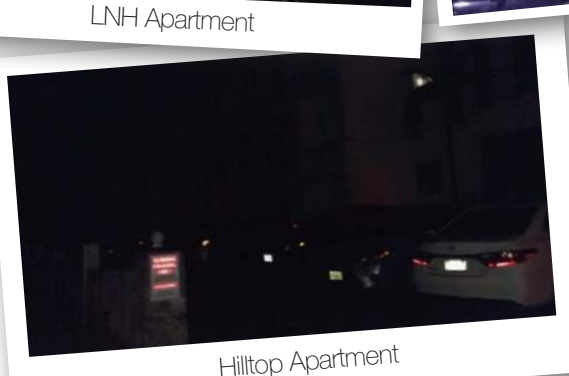
JP Center Front Parking

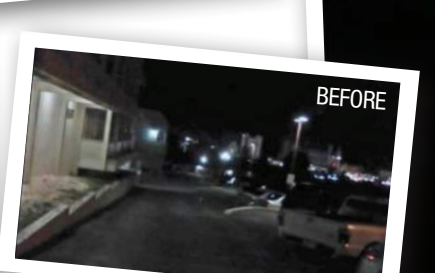


Ocean View Terraces



LNH Apartment


Hilltop Apartment



Sunsetview Terraces

Business

1 year to Brexit: So much to do, so little time

LONDON (AP)—The late British Prime Minister Harold Wilson once said that a week is a long time in politics. For current British leader Theresa May, the coming year—the year before Brexit—may feel like just one very short, rushed week.

Thursday marks 365 days until Britain officially leaves the European Union on March 29, 2019, ending a 46-year marriage that has entwined the economies, legal systems and peoples of Britain and 27 other European countries.

There are a thousand complex issues to settle, and little time. Brexit is not so much like getting toothpaste back into the tube as trying to separate the ingredients of the paste.

Britain formally announced its intention to leave the EU a year ago, triggering a two-year countdown. University of Manchester political science professor Rob Ford said that timeframe is "ludicrously short."

"That's not sufficient time to disentangle 40 years of political, social and economic entanglement," he said. "Even with the best will in the world—which isn't the spirit in which these negotiations have been conducted—it couldn't happen."

AP

British Prime Minister Theresa May walks by flags as she leaves an EU summit in Brussels on Friday, March 23, 2018.

Across the English Channel in Brussels, the chief European Parliament Brexit official, Guy Verhofstadt, listed a few of the many areas where the two sides must strike a deal: fishing, aviation, research and academic exchanges, nuclear cooperation and the handling of radioactive materials. Failure could leave British hospitals unable to offer radiation treatment and British planes stranded on the tarmac.

"In every of these fields it will be necessary to find a new arrangement," Verhofstadt told The Associated Press. Britain will turn into a third country "and a third country cannot have the same advantages as a member state."

The EU has repeated that warning ever since Britain voted in June 2016 to leave: Brexit is going to hurt. That applies especially to future trade and economic ties, which the two sides have barely begun to negotiate.

In a speech this month, May said she wanted "the broadest and deepest possible partnership" through a free-trade deal unlike any other in the world. EU leaders warn Britain that it cannot "cherry-pick" the benefits of membership without the obligations.

The two sides have given themselves until October to agree on the outlines of a deal, so that the EU and national parliaments can sign off on it before Brexit day. That deadline is rapidly approaching after many months of delay and deferral.

Nine months passed between Britain voting to leave the EU and the triggering of the two-year countdown. More delay followed when May called a snap election to strengthen her hand in Brexit talks - only to lose her majority in Parliament and much of her authority as leader.

Her government now relies on support from Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party, which has further complicated talks on the most intractable of all Brexit issues - maintaining the near-invisible border between the EU's Ireland and the U.K.'s Northern Ireland.

Negotiations between Britain and the EU finally began in earnest last summer. Their main achievement so far is a transition period that will last until the end of 2020. During the transition, Britain will continue to pay into EU coffers and follow the bloc's rules, though it will lose its voice in decision-making.

The transition period has eased, though not erased, fears of a Brexit cliff-edge, in which time runs out and Britain crashes out of the EU with no deal. Both Britain and the EU—and most businesses—want to avoid that economically and politically destabilizing scenario.

White House claims win in Korea trade deal, faces skepticism

WASHINGTON (AP)—The White House on Wednesday hailed a revamped trade agreement with South Korea as a vindication of President Donald Trump's hard-nosed approach to international trade.

"It's a big deal and a major win for American workers and American businesses," said White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

Many trade analysts are skeptical that the changes Trump's team negotiated to the six-year-old U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS) will make a dent in America's massive trade deficit or do much to increase U.S. car sales in the near-impenetrable South Korean auto market.

The two countries had a big incentive to reach a deal and ease friction over trade. The two political and military allies need to present a united front ahead of Trump's meeting with reclusive North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

But the administration also clearly used the threat of steep tariffs on imported steel as a cudgel to win concessions from Seoul.

"This is a big eyebrow-raiser," said Christine McDaniel, senior research fellow at George Mason University's Mercatus Center, which promotes free-market economics. "If this is what this trade team can do, I am cautiously optimistic" the U.S. can persuade trading partners to agree to more favorable trade arrangements, including a rewrite of the North America Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico.

The South Koreans agreed to double—to 50,000—the cars each U.S. automaker can export annually to South Korea under less-stringent U.S. safety standards, reduce bureaucratic barriers to American products and let U.S. pharmaceutical companies sell advanced medicine in South Korea at premium prices. The United States also extended a 25 percent tariff on South Korean pickup trucks by 20 years, through 2041.

U.S. Trade Rep. Robert Lighthizer last July began negotiating changes to the U.S.-South Korea free trade agreement that took effect in 2012.

The original deal was supposed to benefit both countries, but the results proved mostly one-sided: The U.S. trade deficit in goods with South Korea ballooned from $13.2 billion in 2011 to $22.9 billion last year, hitting a peak of $28.7 billion in 2015. The United States says South Korea failed to live up to the pact by using non-tariff barriers, such as rigorous customs inspections, to block U.S. products.

Trump has called the 2012 "horrible."

Washington gained negotiating leverage this month when it slapped a 25 percent tax on imported steel from around the world—saying a reliance on foreign steel posed a threat to U.S. national security—and invited its trading partners to negotiate their way out of the tariffs.

In the KORUS talks, South Korea wriggled out of the steel tariffs, but at a cost: It agreed to limit steel exports to 70 percent of its average annual shipments to the United States from 2015 to 2017.

Trump emerging from seclusion to promote infrastructure plan

WASHINGTON (AP)—Attempting a policy reset, President Donald Trump will push for upgrades to the nation's aging roads and bridges Thursday in his first public appearance since an adult-film actress claimed on national TV that they had sex months after his wife gave birth to his fifth child.

Trump is visiting Richfield, Ohio, to sell Americans on his plan to use $200 billion in federal money to spur at least $1.5 trillion in spending over a decade to repair or replace highways, bridges, ports, airports and other infrastructure.

Trump unveiled the sweeping infrastructure proposal in February and cast it as one that could garner bipartisan support. But the plan relies heavily on state and local governments for the bulk of the spending, raising concerns among members of Congress about the possibility of higher commuter tolls and the sale of assets to raise the money.

There is little expectation that Congress will take up a sweeping infrastructure proposal along the lines of what Trump envisions—or that Republicans in control of the House and Senate will write their own legislation—as lawmakers begin to shift their focus to the challenge of getting re-elected in November.

Instead, Congress plans to package a series of related measures, including beefed-up spending in the big budget bill Trump signed into law last week, as infrastructure investments. That bill, which funds the government through Sept. 30, included more money for transportation projects, rural broadband and other investments.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., promoted it in a tweet as "Long-overdue updates to our country's infrastructure."

Trump was last seen in public on Friday, when he used an appearance at the White House to criticize a massive government funding bill he had signed into law. The president, first lady Melania Trump and their 12-year-old son, Barron, spent last weekend at their Palm Beach, Florida, estate. Trump returned to the White House on Sunday shortly before CBS' "60 Minutes" aired its interview with porn actress Stormy Daniels, who says the married Trump had sex with her in his Lake Tahoe hotel room in 2006.

Trump, through his personal attorney and White House aides, has denied the affair. He has not commented on the allegations himself.

The president has kept a relatively low profile since the broadcast, except for a series of tweets about trade and his pending meeting with North Korea's leader. White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders denied Trump was in hiding.

"He's been incredibly active all week long," Sanders said, pointing to actions by Trump on trade and the expulsion of scores of Russian intelligence officials.

Trump has previously suggested the infrastructure proposal was not as important to him as other efforts to cut taxes and increase military spending.

Nation

Study: Armed security officers are on the rise in US schools

WASHINGTON (AP)—Armed security officers are becoming more prevalent at America's schools, according to a federal study released Thursday amid a heated debate over whether teachers and other school officials should carry guns.

Armed officers were present at least once a week in 43 percent of all public schools during the 2015-16 school year, compared with 31 percent of schools a decade before, according to data from a survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Last month's mass shooting at a Florida high school put renewed focus on the role of armed school security guards, after a video showed that a sheriff's deputy at the school approached but did not enter the building where the attack was taking place.

The study came out a day after Education Secretary Betsy DeVos kicked off a federal school safety panel. DeVos has said that schools should have the option to arm teachers. She's being criticized by teachers' unions for not including educators, students and experts in the panel, which consists only of her and three other Cabinet secretaries.

The percentage of schools with a security guard, a school resource officer or other sworn law enforcement officer on campus at least once a week has gone up from 42 percent in 2005-06 to 57 percent a decade later. While security at schools of all grade levels increased, the shift is clearer among elementary schools, where the share with security staff has gone from 26 percent to 45 percent in the same time period.

"There has been an increase in security staff in school over the last 10 years and it's more pronounced at the primary school level," said Lauren Musu-Gillette, lead author of the report.

Experts, however, are divided on whether putting such officers on school campuses will make the schools safer or frighten children and lead to more arrests.

"There needs to be at least one in every school in the country," said Mo Canady, executive director of the National Association of School Resource Officers. "Every school could benefit from one."

School resource officers are sworn law enforcement personnel who have been trained to work in schools. Their duties include controlling outside traffic, patrolling the school, maintaining discipline, identifying problems and mentoring at-risk students, teaching law-related classes and serving as liaisons between schools and police. The school security study released Thursday includes school resource officers, other sworn law enforcement and additional security staff.

Ronald Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Council, agrees, saying that trained officers carrying weapons can help prevent a shooting inside the school and deter a possible shooter from entering.

"It sends the signal that the school is being watched and that the care and supervision of children is an important priority," Stephens said.

Others have questions.

A 2013 congressional report found that the available research "draws conflicting conclusions about whether SRO programs are effective at reducing school violence."

"Also, the research does not address whether SRO programs deter school shootings, one of the key reasons for renewed congressional interest in these programs," the study said.

Family famed for protest photo die when SUV goes off cliff

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—A family that gained attention for an emotional photograph of an African-American boy hugging a white police officer at a 2014 protest was killed when their SUV plunged off a scenic California highway, authorities said Wednesday as they asked for help figuring out what happened.

"We have every indication to believe that all six children were in there," Mendocino County Sheriff Tom Allman said, appealing for tips to retrace where the siblings and two parents had been before the vehicle was found Monday in rocky ocean. "We know that an entire family vanished and perished during this tragedy."

Some friends described married couple Jennifer and Sarah Hart as loving parents who took their adopted kids to Bernie Sanders rallies, while some neighbors said they called child welfare officials in their rural Washington state community over concerns about possible abuse or had noticed red flags.

The California Highway Patrol has not determined why the vehicle went off an ocean overlook on a rugged part of coastline. A specialized team of accident investigators was trying to figure that out, Allman said.

"There were no skid marks, there were no brake marks" at the turnout on the Pacific Coast Highway where the vehicle went over, the sheriff said. Investigators have no reason to believe the crash was intentional, he said.

The 100-foot (31-meter) drop killed the women, both 39, and their children Markis Hart, 19; Jeremiah Hart, 14; and Abigail Hart, 14. Hannah Hart, 16; Devonte Hart, 15; and Sierra Hart, 12, have not been found.

The Harts lived in Woodland, Washington, a small city outside Portland, Oregon, and had a recent visit from Child Protective Services, Clark County sheriff's Sgt. Brent Waddell told The Associated Press.

Tensions high as city mourns unarmed man killed by police

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Family, friends and strangers, some expressing anger and frustration, gathered in Sacramento on Wednesday for a public wake for 22-year-old Stephon Clark, an unarmed man shot by police in his grandparents' backyard.

Some attendees wore black shirts calling for justice, while one woman held up a clenched fist as she exited the Bayside of South Sacramento church. The wake was largely quiet until Clark's brother, Stevante Clark, shouted at the media to leave before being picked up and carried away.

The outburst came a day after he disrupted a Sacramento City Council meeting and chanted his brother's name at Mayor Darrell Steinberg.

Some said the two police officers who shot Clark should be criminally charged, while other mourners said they could envision their own families in Clark's family's place.

"This feels like the '60s, it doesn't feel like 2018. We've definitely regressed," said Cynthia Brown, a friend of Clark's grandfather who brought her 10- and 15-year-old grandsons to the wake. "To me, (they) could be Stephon Clark."

The Rev. Al Sharpton plans to deliver the eulogy at Clark's funeral on Thursday.

Tensions remain high in California's capital city following the March 18 shooting. Two police officers who were responding to a report of someone breaking car windows fatally shot him in his grandparents' backyard. Police say they believe Clark was the suspect and he ran when a police helicopter responded, then did not obey officers' orders.

Police say they thought Clark was holding a gun when he moved toward them, but he was found only with a cellphone.

Many mourners weren't buying that narrative.

"You always feel threatened—you're a law enforcement officer, it comes with your job title," said Rahim Wasi. "That doesn't give you a right to go running around like Clint Eastwood in a movie."

Some of Clark's relatives were more conciliatory.

"We're not mad at all the law enforcement. We're not trying to start a riot," said Shernita Crosby, Stephon Clark's aunt. "What we want the world to know is that we got to stop this because black lives matter."

Northern Marianas College
Procurement & Property Management Office
P.O. Box 501250 CK, Saipan, MP 96950 U.S.A.
Tel: (670) 237-6824 ext. 23/22 Fax: (670) 235-7601
E-mail: ppmo@marianas.edu

INVITATION FOR BIDS
NMC IFB 18-005

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF NEW DISTANCE LEARNING NETWORK AND TELEMEDICINE EQUIPMENT

Northern Marianas College is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the procurement and delivery of SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF NEW DISTANCE LEARNING NETWORK AND TELEMEDICINE EQUIPMENT.

Specifications and Scope of Work packages may be picked up at the **NMC Procurement Office, Bldg. L, 2nd Floor, commencing FRIDAY, MARCH 02, 2018 between the hours of 9:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m.**

For Bidder located outside of the CNMI may request a copy of the IFB via fax (670) 235-7601 or email to Anita Camacho (anita.camacho@marianas.edu).

Bid Packages are due no later than 10:00 a.m., APRIL 02, 2018, at Northern Marianas College, As Terlaje Campus, Procurement Office, Bldg. L, 2nd Floor, Saipan, MP 96950. You may request a copy of the NMC IFB 18-005 packet via fax (670) 235-7601 or e-mail to Anita Camacho (anita.camacho@marianas.edu).

Paid for in part by Federal Funds through the USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program.

In accordance with Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, Local Preference is not available to local businesses for this procurement.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. The NMC reserves the right to reject any and/or all bid offers for any reason and waive any defect in said bids, or cancel in part or its entirety this IFB, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College. All costs incurred by the proposer to prepare a response to this solicitation and subsequent inquiries shall be borne by the proposer. All submittals shall become the property of NMC.

/s/ Anita Camacho
Procurement & Property Manager

A Land Grant Institution accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and by The Senior Commission for Colleges and Universities of the Western Association for Schools and Colleges

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INVITATION FOR BIDS
NMC IFB 18-006

PARKING LOT DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Northern Marianas College (The College) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the procurement of Parking Lot Drainage Improvement Project for the As Terlaje, Saipan Campus.

Specifications and Scope of Work packages may be picked up at the **NMC Procurement Office, Bldg. L, 2nd Floor, commencing Monday, March 12, 2018, between the hours of 8:30-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m.**

Bid Submissions are due no later than 10:00 a.m., April 13, 2018, at Northern Marianas College, As Terlaje Campus, Procurement Office, Bldg. L, 2nd Floor, Saipan, MP 96950. In accordance with Public Laws 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, Local Preference is available to local businesses for this procurement.

For Bidders located outside of the CNMI: May request a copy of the IFB via fax (670) 235-7601 or email to Anita Camacho (anita.camacho@marianas.edu).

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/s/ Anita Camacho
NMC Procurement & Property Manager

A Land Grant Institution accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and by The Senior Commission for Colleges and Universities of the Western Association for Schools and Colleges

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
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Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPLB) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on **Tuesday, April 03, 2018 at 8:00 a.m.** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the CHCC Conference Room #3, Lower Navy Hill.

AGENDA

I. Meeting Call to Order
II. Determination of Quorum
III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (02/15/18)
V. Public Comments
VI. Chairperson's Report
A. Quarterly Declaration Report from Dr. Gahlinger
VII. Director's Report
VIII. Investigator's Report
IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
A. Governor's Office
B. Legislature
X. Old Business
XI. New Business
XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
A. New Applications:
B. Renewal Applications:
XIII. Miscellaneous Business
XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with counsel with pending or anticipated legal matters.
A. Physician #0608
XV. Announcements
A. Next Meeting Date
B. Adjournment of Meeting

/s/ Theodore R. Parker, R.Ph., MPH
Chairman

Asia

Rival Koreas begin high-level talks meant to set up summit

AP
South Korean soldiers stand as vehicles carrying a South Korean delegation pass the Unification Bridge, which leads to the Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone in Paju, South Korea, Thursday, March 29, 2018.

PAJU, South Korea (AP)—High-level officials from North and South Korea began talks at a border village Thursday to prepare for an April summit between their leaders amid a global diplomatic push to resolve the standoff over the North's nuclear program.

Officials plan to use the talks at the northern side of Panmunjom to determine the date and agenda of the meeting between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in. The results of the closed-door talks weren't immediately clear.

Seoul's Unification Minister Cho Myoung-gyon, one of the three South Koreans participants, told reporters before their talks that setting up discussions between the leaders on ways to rid the North of its nuclear weapons would be a critical point. He said there could be several such preparatory meetings. The North's three delegates were led by Ri Son Gwon, chairman of a state agency that deals with inter-Korean affairs.

The South's delegation arrived in Panmunjom after their vehicles crossed the heavily guarded border near the southern city of Paju.

Greeting the South Korean officials at the North Korea-controlled Tongilgak building, Ri said that the past 80 days have been filled with "unprecedented historic events" between the rivals, referring to the Koreas resuming dialogue before the Winter Olympics in the South and the agreement on the summit. He expressed hopes for an outcome that would meet the "hope and desire of the nation."

Cho, in response, said officials in the preparatory talks should do their best to set up a successful summit as the "current situation was created by decisions from the highest leaders of the North and South."

The talks follow a surprise meeting this week between Kim and Chinese President Xi Jinping, which appeared to be aimed at improving both countries' positions ahead of Kim's planned meetings with Moon and President Donald Trump.

In setting up separate talks with Beijing, Seoul, Washington, and potentially with Moscow and Tokyo, North Korea may be moving to disrupt any united front among its negotiating counterparts. By reintroducing China, which is the North's only major ally, as a major player, North Korea also gains leverage against South Korea and the United States, analysts say.

In his talks with Xi, Kim may have discussed economic cooperation with China or requested a softening of enforcement of sanctions over the North's nukes and missiles. North Korea also wants Beijing to resist tougher sanctions if the talks with Washington and Seoul fall apart and the North starts testing missiles again.

Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi arrived in Seoul on Thursday for a two-day trip to brief South Korean officials on the results of the talks between Kim and Xi. Yang is expected to meet Seoul's presidential national security director Chung Eui-yong on Thursday before meeting President Moon on Friday. Moon's spokesman Kim Eui-kyeom in a statement said Seoul welcomes the meeting between Kim and Trump and that it was an encouraging sign that Kim expressed firm willingness for dialogue with South Korea and the United States during his visit to Beijing.

North Korea has yet to officially confirm its interest in a summit between Kim and Trump. In its coverage of the Kim-Xi meeting, the North's state media didn't carry Kim's reported comments opening dialogue with the United States that were carried in Chinese state media.

The leaders of the two Koreas have held talks only twice since the 1950-53 Korean War, in 2000 and 2007, under previous liberal governments in Seoul.

It's unclear whether the leaders' meetings between Seoul, Pyongyang and Washington, if they take place, could lead to any meaningful breakthrough.

The North's diplomatic outreach comes after an unusually provocative year where it conducted its most powerful nuclear test to date and three intercontinental ballistic missiles designed to target the U.S. mainland. The change in tactics could be an attempt to ease pressure from heavy sanctions and improve its economy.

Malala Yousafzai in Pakistan for 1st time since she was shot

Yousafzai

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai returned to Pakistan early Thursday for the first time since she was shot in 2012 by Taliban militants angered at her championing of education for girls.

Tight security greeted the now-20-year-old university student upon her arrival at Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto International Airport. Local television showed her with her parents in the lounge at the airport before leaving in a convoy of nearly 15 vehicles, many of them occupied by heavily armed police.

She is to meet with Pakistan's prime minister later in the day. Her return to Pakistan has been shrouded in secrecy and it wasn't immediately clear how long she would be in Islamabad or whether she planned to travel to her hometown of Swat where the shooting occurred.

Yousafzai was just 14 but already known for her activism when Taliban gunman boarded the school van in which she was sitting and demanded to know "who is Malala?" before shooting her in the head. Two of her classmates were also injured. In critical condition, Yousafzai was flown to the garrison city of Rawalpindi before being airlifted to Birmingham in Britain.

She has spoken at the United Nations, mesmerizing the world with her eloquence and her unrelenting commitment to the promotion of girl's education through the Malala Fund, a book, meetings with refugees, and other activism.

She was awarded the Nobel in 2014, along with Indian child-rights activist Kailash Satyarthi, and said on the day she collected the Nobel that "Education is one of the blessings of life, and one of its necessities."

She remained in Britain after undergoing medical treatment there and was accepted to the University of Oxford last year.

But at home in Pakistan, she has been condemned by some as a Western mouthpiece with some even suggesting on social media that the shooting was staged. Yousafzai has repeatedly responded to the criticism with a grace far outstripping her years, often saying education is neither Western, nor Eastern.

Often when she has spoken in public she has championed her home country and spoken in her native Pashto language, always promising to return to her home.

On March 23 when Pakistan celebrated Pakistan Day, Yousafzai tweeted, "I cherish fond memories of home, of playing cricket on rooftops and singing the national anthem in school. Happy Pakistan Day!"

ASIAN BRIEFS

Lebanese suspect charged with murdering Filipina maid

BEIRUT (AP)—Lebanon's state-run news agency is reporting that a Lebanese man has been charged with murdering a Filipina maid whose body was found stuffed in a freezer in Kuwait. National News Agency reports that a south Lebanon prosecutor on Tuesday charged 40-year-old Nader Essam Assaf and that Assaf confessed to the crime. Assaf and his Syrian wife are suspects in the death of Joanna Demafelis. NNA said Assaf's wife is at large. The news agency said Assaf faces a possible death sentence and is expected to go on trial soon. Last month, the Philippine foreign secretary said the suspect was under arrest in Lebanon.

Filipino extremist blamed for bombings, killings surrenders

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine defense chief says a senior commander of the Abu Sayyaf extremist group involved in bombings and kidnappings has surrendered and hopes this may bring the "eventual collapse" of the militants' southern stronghold. Military officials say Nurhassan Jamiri surrendered with 13 of his men to army forces in southern Basilan province Wednesday. He also handed over 10 assault rifles and a large cache of ammunition. Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana says Jamiri's surrender, which came after negotiations with authorities, "will hopefully bring the eventual collapse of the Abu Sayyaf group in Basilan," the birthplace of the small but violent group. Jamiri has been blamed for years of bloody attacks, including a 2007 ambush that killed 24 Philippine marines, several of whom were beheaded.

Teenage Taiwanese exchange student accused of school threat

UPPER DARBY, Pa. (AP)—A Taiwanese exchange student accused of threatening a shooting at his high school had ammunition in the home where he was staying and researched how to buy weapons, police said Wednesday. The 18-year-old student, An Tso Sun, threatened to "shoot up" the Monsignor Bonner and Archbishop Prendergast High School on May 1, Upper Darby police said. Sun later said he was joking but was charged with making terroristic threats, they said. "Kudos to the person who stepped forward and helped to avert a tragedy," the police department said in a tweet. A military-style ballistic vest, ammunition clip pouches, a high-powered crossbow and live ammunition were found in Sun's bedroom in Lansdowne, Superintendent Michael Chitwood said. A search of his school-issued iPad indicated searches on how to buy an AK-47 or an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle, police said. Defense attorney Enrique Latoison said his client "had no intention or plans" to commit a school shooting and many items found were what he wore to school for a Halloween costume contest.

World

Russian ex-spy likely poisoned at front door, UK police say

LONDON (AP)—The Russian ex-spy and his daughter left critically ill in a nerve agent attack three weeks ago were probably poisoned at the front door of their home in southwestern England, British police said Wednesday.

It was the first time police have said where they thought Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia might have been poisoned.

The highest concentration of nerve agent found so far was on the Skripals' front door in Salisbury, and detectives plan to focus their investigation in the surrounding area, London's Metropolitan Police force said in a statement.

"At this point in our investigation, we believe the Skripals first came in contact with the nerve agent from their front door," Deputy Assistant Commissioner Dean Haydon said in the statement.

Police have also searched a variety of sites around Salisbury, including a pub, a restaurant and a cemetery.

Britain has blamed Russia for the attack, triggering the expulsion of about 150 Russian diplomats from the U.K., U.S. and their Western allies. Russia has vowed to respond, but a senior diplomat said Wednesday there is no hurry to retaliate.

AP

A vehicle wrapped in blue tarpaulin is removed from Larkhill Road in Durrington, 10 miles (16 kilometers) north of Salisbury, England, on the back of an Army lorry, Monday March 19, 2018, as the investigation into the suspected nerve agent attack on Russian double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia continues.

Russia vehemently denies Britain's accusation that it was behind the March 4 attack.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told the RIA Novosti state news agency that Moscow is "thoughtfully and thoroughly" considering its response. Separately, he was quoted by the Interfax news agency as saying the expulsions were directed by London and Washington, adding that other nations succumbed to their pressure. He added that "all options are on the table" regarding Russia's response.

President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, told reporters that Russia's response "will suit the interests of Russia."

President Donald Trump spoke with British Prime Minister Theresa May about the coordinated effort by Western allies to expel Russian intelligence operatives. The White House said the leaders agreed Wednesday that dismantling Russian spy rings is a priority to "curtail Russian clandestine activities and prevent future chemical weapons attacks on either country's soil."

Skripal was imprisoned in Russia after he sold secrets to British intelligence. He was released in a 2010 spy swap and moved to Britain.

Britain says the Skripals were poisoned with a nerve agent developed in Soviet times and that it must have come from Russia. Russian officials complain that Britain hasn't presented evidence to back up the accusation.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said Wednesday that British special services could have been behind the poisoning. British officials have previously rejected such Russian claims as nonsense.

Ecuador cuts WikiLeaks founder Assange's internet at embassy

QUITO, Ecuador (AP)—Ecuador's government said Wednesday it has cut off WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's internet connection at the nation's London embassy after his recent activity on social media decrying the arrest of a Catalan separatist politician.

In a statement, officials said Assange's recent posts "put at risk" the good relations Ecuador maintains with nations throughout Europe and had decided as of Tuesday to suspend his internet access "in order to prevent any potential harm."

Assange has since gone silent on social media.

Ecuador granted Assange asylum in the South American nation's London embassy in 2012, where he has remained cooped up ever since. Ecuador has repeatedly tried to find a solution that would allow Assange to leave without the threat of arrest, but with no success. He remains wanted in Britain for jumping bail and also fears a possible U.S. extradition request based on his leaking of classified State Department documents.

Relations between Assange and his host nation have often grown prickly.

Ecuador suspended his internet access in 2016 after a WikiLeaks dump targeting Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. And while former President Rafael Correa hailed Assange's work, the South American country's current head of state has called him a hacker and warned him not to meddle in politics.

As part of an agreement allowing him to stay at Ecuador's embassy, Assange is forbidden from sending any messages that would interfere with the country's diplomatic relations other nations.

"He violated that agreement," said Maria Fernanda Espinosa, Ecuador's minister of foreign affairs.

She added that Ecuador's government would be sending of a group of diplomats to meet with Assange's legal team in London next week while also continuing a dialogue with British officials on how to resolve "an inherited problem."

Assange frequently tweets more than a dozen times a day, sharing news stories and comments that often focus on global politics and digital security issues. In recent days, Assange had criticized Germany's detention of former Catalan president Carles Puigdemont. He wrote that the European arrest warrant system "allows an abusive government to persecute its opponents across the whole of the EU."

He also chimed in a decision by the United States and more than a dozen European nations to kick out Russian diplomats on Monday following Moscow's alleged poisoning of an ex-spy in Britain.

"The manner of and timing of Russian diplomatic expulsions is poor diplomacy," he wrote.

Following Assange's remarks, a British minister called him a "miserable little worm" and said it was regretful that he remains in Ecuador's embassy.

Ecuador granted the Australian-born Assange citizenship in December as part of an effort to make him a member of its diplomatic team, which would grant him additional rights like special legal immunity. But Britain's Foreign Office rejected the request to grant him diplomatic status in the U.K.

Angry families demand facts on deadly Venezuela jail riot

VALENCIA, Venezuela (AP)—Distraught families are clamoring for information about detained relatives following a fire that Venezuela's chief prosecutor says killed 68 people when it swept through the cells of the state police station.

Angry relatives fought with police outside the facility Wednesday after being unable to get any information on casualties from Wednesday's fire, which townspeople said erupted after a disturbance involving detainees. Officers used tear gas to disperse the crowd, and local officials would confirm only that there were fatalities.

Late Wednesday, Attorney General Tarek William Saab said on his official Twitter account that 68 people were dead and nearly all of them were prisoners. He said the dead included two women who were staying overnight at the station, but he didn't provide any further details.

Saab said four prosecutors had been named to determine what happened at the state police headquarters in Valencia, a town in Carabobo state about 100 miles (160 kilometers) west of Caracas.

It was one of the worst jail disasters in Venezuela, where human rights groups complain about poor conditions in prisons and jails. A fire at a prison in the western state of Zulia killed more than 100 inmates in 1994.

With tears streaking cheeks, people waiting outside the station Wednesday said dozens of detainees had been kept in squalid conditions and they feared the worst for their loved ones.

Some people buried their hands in their faces. Others had to be supported by friends and family as they collapsed in despair. Some wept quietly and clutched their hands in prayer.

"I don't know if my son is dead or alive!" cried Aida Parra, who said she last saw her son the previous day, when she took food to him. "They haven't told me anything."

Nearby, National Guard troops wearing flak jackets and carrying rifles slung across their backs walked in and out of the station. Fire trucks and ambulances stood outside. Unused stretchers leaned against a wall.

A Window to Freedom, a nonprofit group that monitors conditions at Venezuela's jails and prisons, said preliminary but unconfirmed information indicated the riot began when an armed detainee shot an officer in the leg. Shortly after that a fire broke out, with flames growing quickly as the blaze spread to mattresses in the cells, it said. Rescuers apparently had to break a hole through a wall to free some of the prisoners inside.

Photos shared by the group showed prisoners being taken out on stretchers, their limbs frozen in awkward positions as skin peeled off.

Carlos Nieto Palma, director of A Window to Freedom, said officials should be held accountable for failing to address the poor conditions in police station jails. The group said overcrowding has become common throughout Venezuela, with detainees being kept long past customary brief holding periods before being let go or sent to larger jails to await trial.

"It's grave and alarming," Nieto Palma said. "What happened today in Carabobo is a sign of that."

Opposition lawmaker Juan Miguel Matheus demanded that the pro-government leader of Carabobo state inform relatives about what happened.

Off The Wall

Yucky ducky? Study reveals bath-time toy's dirty secret

BERN, Switzerland (AP)—Scientists have the dirt on the rubber ducky: Those cute yellow bath-time toys area—as some parents have long suspected—a haven for nasty bugs.

Swiss and American researchers counted the microbes swimming inside the toys and say the murky liquid released when ducks were squeezed contained "potentially pathogenic bacteria" in four out of the five toys studied.

The bacteria found included Legionella and Pseudomonas aeruginosa, a bacterium that is "often implicated in hospital-acquired infections," the authors said in a statement.

The study by the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology, ETH Zurich and the University of Illinois was published Tuesday in the journal Biofilms and Microbiomes. It's billed as one of the first in-depth scientific examinations of its kind.

AP
The March 27, 2018 photo shows the inside of a rubber duck after it was cut open for the photo in Nauen, Germany. Swiss researchers now say the cute, yellow bath-time friends harbor a dirty secret: Microbes swimming inside.

They turned up a strikingly high volume—up to 75 million cells per square centimeter (0.15 square inch)—and variety of bacteria and fungus in the ducks.

Tap water doesn't usually foster the growth of bacteria, the scientists said, but low-quality polymers in the plastic materials give them the nutrients they need. Bodily fluids—like urine and sweat—as well as contaminants and even soap in bathwater add microbes and nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus and create balmy brine for bacteria.

"We've found very big differences between different bath animals," said microbiologist and lead study author Lisa Neu, alluding to other types of bath toys—like rubber crocodiles—that also were examined. "One of the reasons was the material, because it releases carbon that can serve as food for the bacteria."

Called to Eternal Life
Escolastica Igitol Taitano Iguel
Lovingly known as "Tikang"
"A Wonderful Wife, Mother, Grandmother, An Educator and A Servant to the Lord whom will be deeply missed."
Born to life on February 10, 1951
Called to Eternal Life March 25, 2018
In her new life, she now joins her:
Parents: †Jose Esteves and †Maria I. Taitano
Parents in Law: †Manases and †Aurela I. Iguel
Tikang was survived by her:
Husband: Sylvestre "Beti" Ilo Iguel
And their Children:
Sylvestre D. Iguel Jr.
Melinda I. & Gerard Muna: Joshua/Ayanna (Sebastian), Stevielyn, Jennica, Malia, Gerard II.
Moses D. and Morgan Iguel: Gio
John Anthony Iguel & Tanya Concepcion: Trini Marie and John Anthony Jr.
Jose Benito Iguel & Yvette Cruz: Therese Marie, Noah Jose and Herman Clayton
Aurelia Marie Iguel & Izaiah Falig: Zekiel Samson, Zaida Shay, Zayani Summer and Zayn Sylvestre
Weena Gwendolyn Iguel & Ryan Sablan
Brothers, Sisters and their spouse:
†Teresa I. Taitano and Reared Children
†Augustine and †Rita Taitano and Children
Joaquin "Jack" and Jocelyn Taitano and Children
Ursula I. L. and Francisco Aldan and Children
Francisco "Boy" and Victoria Taitano and Children
Edwina and Wilard Ngotel and Children
Brother/Sister-In-Laws:
†Juan and Dolores Iguel and Children
Magdalena I. and †Joaquin Deleon Guerrero and Children
†Estela I. and †Manuel Norita and Children
†Gregorio and Lourdes Iguel and Children
Cynthia I. and †Rasao Martin and Children
†Isabel and +Antonio Marlik and Children
Anna I. and Alcantro Sarapio and Children
Margarita I. Iguel and Children
†Francisco and Morinah Iguel and Children
Henry and Elaine Iguel and Children
Maria I. and Johnnie Sam and Children
†Antonio Iguel
Susana I. and Delvin Elieisar and Child
Gerdina I. and †Randy Gines and Children
†Antonio "Ton" and Janet Iguel and Children
She will also be missed by numerous
Auntie, Cousins, Nieces, Nephews, God-children.
Holy Rosary is being said daily until April 1, 2018 at 12:00 Noon at Nuestra Senora Bithen Delos Remedios Church, Tanapag and Mass of Intention is scheduled for Saturday (March 31) at 6pm and Sunday (April 1) at 8:00 am.
The Funeral Services will be Monday, April 02, 2018. Her remains will be escorted from Borja's Funeral Home to Nuestra Senora Bithen Delos Remedios Church, Tanapag at 7:00 am.
Responso services and Holy Rosary will take place upon arrival of her remains.
Mass of Christian Burial will be at 10 a.m. followed by the Interment service at Tanapag Cemetery where she will be laid to rest.
Your presence, thoughts and prayers are appreciated.
Thank you, Si Yu'us Ma'ase yan Olomwaay
Sylvestre I. Iguel, Children and entire Family

Burger joint seeks a restraining order against online prankster

LOS ANGELES (AP)—In-N-Out Burger is seeking a restraining order against an online prankster who posed as the company's CEO at two Los Angeles restaurants, argued with employees and in one instance took a hamburger from a customer, threw it to the ground and stepped on it, claiming it was "garbage."

The California-based chain filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles last week requesting the order against Cody Roeder, who posts YouTube videos under the name Trollmunchies, the Orange County Register reported Monday. An email seeking comment from Roeder was not immediately returned.

"We have recently seen an increase of visitors to our stores, who are not customers but instead are intentionally disruptive and who then try to promote themselves through social media," In-N-Out Executive Vice President Arnie Wensinger said in a statement. "These visitors have unfortunately used deceit, fraud, and trespass to their own advantage, and in each instance, they have attempted to humiliate, offend, or otherwise make our customers or associates uncomfortable."

The suit claims Roeder caused "significant and irreparable" harm to the chain with the incidents this month. It seeks damages of more than $25,000.

In-N-Out's attorneys say those who accompanied Roeder and covertly filmed the behavior, "are unjustly profiting from this illegal activity," and wants the restraining order extended to them as well. It seeks to keep them and Roeder from entering In-N-Out restaurants or harassing its employees and customers. They are not identified in court documents.

Man wins $194K on his first spin

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP)—A New Jersey man who signed up for internet gambling has won nearly $194,000 on his very first spin of an online slots game.

Anibal Lopes, of Woodbridge, said he was bored after work Monday night, so he created an account on the playsugarhouse.com website on his smartphone.

Choosing a slots game called Divine Fortune, the 33-year-old won its Mega Jackpot on his very first spin.

"I thought, 'This is not happening,' " he said. "I couldn't believe I won that much money. I told my wife: 'I don't feel well. My legs are shaking.' She said, 'We need to get you to the emergency room.' I told her, 'No, I'm not sick; I just won close to $194,000!'"

The progressive jackpot had been building since it was last hit in September.

The website, run by Rush Street Interactive, is affiliated with Atlantic City's Golden Nugget casino.

Lopes said he played other gambling sites in New Jersey sporadically since online wagering became legal in 2013, but stopped for a number of years.

The construction company superintendent plans to use the money to pay bills, repair his house, and set up a savings account for his 6-year-old son.

He usually visits Atlantic City about six times a year, but now says he prefers the convenience of gambling from his phone without having to make the four-hour round trip from his home.

WITH OUR HEARTFELT GRATITUDE

We, the wife, children and grandchildren of the late

†JOAQUIN S. TORRES

Lovingly Known as "Jack"

are indeed deeply grateful for the outpouring support, care, kindness, words of comfort and wisdom extended to us during our most difficult time of our lives as we mourn and grief in the passing of our dearly beloved. You all have been our strength in our most trying moments.

Our beloved Jack was welcomed home by our Lord on March 11, 2018. His passing has affected us immensely but we are content knowing that our beloved Jack now dwells in eternal life with our Lord's lovely and promised paradise.

We respectfully thank His Excellency Bishop Ryan P. Jimenez D.D. for presiding over the Mass of Christian Burial. Fr. Kenneth Hezel, SJ for co-celebrating the mass; to our Rosary Techa Dolores S. Moore and the musical choir provided by Margaret C. Dela Cruz and Frank C. Cabrera.

To all our families, relatives and friends, we thank you so much for your acts of kindness and generous helping hands to our family before/during/after the service. It was so comforting to us to know these details were in your hands.

When someone we love passes on beyond life

in the world that we know and is gone,

A beautiful sense of their presence, like music remembered by heart, lingers on...

When someone we love finds a wonderful home in a world only faith can reveal,

Our memories can be like a song in the heart,

With the power to comfort and heal.

Author Unknown

Dianne, Children and Grandchildren

Life & Style

Thai beach from DiCaprio movie getting a breather from tourists

In this March 4, 2017, photo, tourists enjoy the popular Maya bay on Phi Phi island, Krabi province. AP

BANGKOK (AP)—The daily hordes of tourists have exhausted the Thai beach made famous by the Leonardo DiCaprio movie.

Authorities have announced Maya Bay, on Phi Phi Leh island in the Andaman Sea, will be closed to all visitors for four months annually starting this June to allow for the recovery of the battered coral reefs and sea life. The decision to keep visitors away was made Wednesday by Thailand's National Parks and Wildlife Department.

"It's like someone who has been working for decades and has never stopped," said Thon Thamrongnawasawat, a prominent marine scientist and member of Thailand's national strategy committee on environment development. "Overworked and tired, all the beauty of the beach is gone. We need a timeout for the beach."

Many Thai marine national parks are closed from mid-May to mid-October, but because of tourist demand, Maya Bay has remained open year-round since a Hollywood crew set foot there in 1999 to film "The Beach," the dark backpacker tale based on a novel by Alex Garland.

The beach receives an average of 200 boats and 4,000 visitors each day.

Recent surveys by a team led by marine biologists found a large part of the coral reefs around the area is gone and sea life has virtually disappeared.

Thon said the temporary closing will kick-start the rehabilitation process.

"If you ask me if it is too late to save our islands, the answer is no. But if we don't do something today, it will be too late," said Thanya Netithammakum, head of the National Parks and Wildlife Department.

When Maya Bay reopens, the department will set a daily limit of 2,000 tourists, while boats will no longer be allowed to anchor there and will have to dock on the opposite side of the island at floating piers.

The number of visitors the beach has been seeing is unsustainable, and a temporary closure is better than nothing, Thon said.

"The locals know that and we all know that," he said. "This would be a good way to start managing our tourist destinations. And we can improve on what we learn after the first year. We know that it's important we manage our resources well. It's not about more numbers of tourists but about sustainable tourism that benefit locals as well."

More than 35 million tourists visited Thailand last year, compared to around 10 million when "The Beach" premiered in 2000.

Thai authorities have in the past closed off islands ruined by mass tourism. Koh Yoong, part of the Phi Phi island chain, and Koh Tachai, in the Similan Islands National Park, have been off limits to tourists permanently since mid-2016.

Thon, who surveyed both islands recently, said the results have been amazing. Areas with a bleak sea life environment and coral bleaching are now teeming with robust and colorful sea life and coral, he said. He's certain that the annual closure will also help restore Maya Bay.

Records president out amid sex misconduct probe

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Charlie Walk, who has been a top executive at several record labels and worked with artists such as Ariana Grande and The Weeknd, is leaving his job as president of Republic Records after a sexual misconduct investigation, the company said Wednesday.

The record label and Walk have "mutually agreed to part ways," according to a brief statement from Republic, a subsidiary of Universal Music Group.

Walk had been on leave since January, when the company hired an independent law firm to investigate and asked employees to come forward if they had been mistreated.

Nothing was revealed Wednesday about its findings.

Former employee Tristan Coopersmith previously wrote in an open letter to Walk on her website that he regularly made inappropriate statements to her when she worked for him at Columbia Records. She also said he put his hand on her thigh and once pushed her onto a bed.

"For a year I shuddered at the idea of being called into your office, where you would stealthily close the door and make lewd comments about my body and share your fantasies of having sex with me," Coopersmith wrote.

Five more women told similar stories to Rolling Stone magazine.

Walk has denied all the allegations. He said in a statement released when he was put on leave that he supports the #MeToo movement but there has been an extreme rush to judgment against him.

Walk's status as a cast member on the Fox competition show "The Four" is unclear. He skipped the season finale in February, saying his presence would be a distraction.

Science & Technology

Zuckerberg to testify in Congress

NEW YORK (AP)—Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg plans to testify before Congress about the company's privacy practices in coming weeks, according to a person familiar with the matter.

This person spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly. Zuckerberg is aware there is intense pressure on him to testify, this person said.

Zuckerberg said last week in a CNN interview that he'd be "happy" to testify, but didn't commit to appear. Facebook is facing unprecedented scrutiny following reports that a data mining firm used ill-gotten data from tens of millions of its users to try to influence elections.

A spokeswoman for the House Energy and Commerce Committee said Tuesday that the committee is working with Facebook to determine a day and time for Zuckerberg to testify.

Zuckerberg

Meanwhile, Zuckerberg snubbed a summons from a British Parliamentary committee investigating the rise of fake news, offering to send senior Facebook executives instead.

This would be the first time Zuckerberg has ever testified before Congress. Last fall, the company sent its top lawyer to speak before Congress about Russian interference in the 2016 elections. Google and Twitter also sent lower-level executives to the three public hearings on the matter.

Separately, Facebook announced a privacy settings makeover on Wednesday. While the move is intended to prepare for tighter European privacy regulations going into effect in May, Facebook said that recent events "underscore their importance."

The changes won't affect Facebook's privacy policies or the types of data it gathers on users. But the company hopes its 2.2 billion users will have an easier time navigating its complex and often confusing privacy and security settings. Facebook says it also wants to give users a simpler way to access and download the data it collects on them.

Other ways to eliminate pop-up ads from phone and tablet browsers

Several readers say they still find it nearly impossible to eliminate Amazon pop-up ads from their iPhone Safari Web browsers, despite my earlier suggestions (tinyurl.com/yc2ql2db).

"Sorry, your advice doesn't work," said Franz Kabelka of Columbus, Ohio. "Any other suggestions?"

Yes. The ads appear to be generated by unwanted software on the phone (it's unclear if they are really from Amazon or just use the name to encourage people to click on something.) As a result, readers should try to get rid of the ads by turning off some browser helper programs called "extensions." Extensions weren't affected by my earlier advice.

Desirable extensions add new browser features. Undesirable extensions, which may be secretly installed by some websites, often show pop-up ads.

To find the Safari extensions on an iPhone, open the browser and view any website. At the bottom of the screen, click on the icon that looks like a square with an upward arrow through it. You will see two rows of buttons; the top row consists of "share extensions" and the bottom row contains "action extensions." By scrolling to the right in either row you will find a button with three dots that is labeled "more."

In the top row, click the "more" button to find extensions that are either on (green color next to slider button) or off (white color next to slider button.) If you see a questionable extension, move the slider beside it to the off position. Click "done." Do the same thing in the bottom row. For a list of undesirable iPhone Safari extensions, see tinyurl.com/lv29448 and scroll down to "removing unwanted extensions."

If that doesn't work, reader Mickey Doughty of Blandon, Pa., said he and his wife solved the problem on their iPhone 8s by downloading the free "1Blocker" security app from the App Store.

If that still doesn't solve the problem, the fix may have to come from Apple in the form of a software update. If that's the case, consider using an alternative Web browser. You can download the free Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox browsers via the App Store.

Logitech, a maker of computer mice and their software, has offered an alternative fix for the Windows 10 error message that afflicted the mouse of Tom Butler of Reading, Pa. (tinyurl.com/ybq6zm22). I had suggested disabling the "Logitech Download Assistant" program that updates the mouse software, and then relying on manual updates. But a company spokeswoman said it is better to replace an outdated software driver and retain automated updates.

To do that, go to Control Panel and click "device manager." From the list, click the arrow next to "mice and other pointing devices," and then highlight "Logitech USB input device." Right-click the device, and then choose "uninstall device." In the next menu, be sure to check the box next to "delete the driver software for this device." Click "uninstall." Then install a new driver by highlighting and right-clicking the Logitech device again and choosing "scan for hardware changes."

To make sure the driver was updated, highlight and right-click the Logitech device, choose properties and click the "driver" tab. The new driver is called "USB Input Device" instead of "Download Assistant."

TECH Q&A

By STEVE ALEXANDER
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Steve Alexander covers technology for the Minneapolis Star Tribune. *Readers may write to him at Tech Q&A, 425 Portland Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. 55488-0002; email: steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name, city and phone number.*

Stormy Daniels seeking Trump's answers under oath

WASHINGTON (AP)— Cranking up pressure on the president, porn actress Stormy Daniels wants Donald Trump to answer her attorney's questions under oath about a pre-election payment aimed at keeping her quiet about their alleged tryst.

If she's successful, it would be the first deposition of a sitting president since Bill Clinton in 1998 had to answer questions about his conduct with women.

Daniels' attorney, Michael Avenatti, is seeking sworn testimony from Trump and his personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, about a $130,000 payment made to Daniels days before the 2016 presidential election as part of a nondisclosure agreement she is seeking to invalidate. Avenatti filed the motion in U.S. District Court in California on Wednesday.

Trump has kept a low profile all week, as has first lady Melania Trump, who is spending the week in Florida. White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump had denied the allegations and directed further questions to outside counsel. Cohen's attorney, David Schwartz, told CBS that the filing was a "reckless use of the legal system."

Despite the pushback, the persistent focus on Daniels is a troubling distraction for a White House already struggling with an exodus of top staffers, a floundering agenda and the looming threat from the Russia investigation.

Avenatti is just one on a growing list of lawyers looking to question Trump. Attorneys for a former "Apprentice" contestant have said they want to depose the president as part of a defamation suit. And the president's legal team continues to negotiate with special counsel Robert Mueller over the scope and terms of an interview with the president.

AP

In this Sept. 19, 2017, file photo, Michael Cohen, President Donald Trump's personal attorney, arrives on Capitol Hill in Washington. Cohen, is challenging porn actress Stormy Daniel's unsubstantiated charge that someone tied to Trump threatened her with physical harm if she went public with her story about a tryst with Trump years ago.

A hard-charging attorney maintaining a near-constant presence on television news, Avenatti wants to question Trump and Cohen for "no more than two hours." In the filing, he says the depositions are needed to establish if Trump knew about the payment, which Avenatti refers to as a "hush agreement," and if the future president consented to it.

"We're looking for sworn answers from the president and Mr. Cohen about what they knew, when they knew it and what they did about it," Avenatti told The Associated Press.

While he noted that "in every case you always have to be open to settlement," Avenatti said that "at this point we don't see how this case would possibly be settled."

A former businessman, Trump is no stranger to high-stakes litigation, sitting for depositions in contract and defamation lawsuits over the years. Those interviews show his deep experience in giving statements to lawyers, but also reveal a witness who could be voluble, boastful and, at times, combative.

Georgetown University law professor Naomi Mezey said a deposition presented risks because it is the way to get the president in a vulnerable position. "And President Trump is a particularly vulnerable president," Mezey said.

Daniels, whose legal name is Stephanie Clifford, detailed her alleged 2006 tryst with Trump in a widely watched interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" broadcast Sunday. She said she'd had sex with him once, shortly after Melania Trump gave birth to the president's youngest son.

Daniels also said that a man approached her in a Las Vegas parking lot in 2011 when she was with her infant daughter, and threatened her with physical harm if she went public with her story.

The interview prompted a flurry of new legal action, with a lawyer for Cohen demanding that Daniels publicly apologize to his client for suggesting Cohen was involved in her intimidation. Daniels responded by filing a revised federal lawsuit accusing Cohen of defamation.

Cohen has said he paid the $130,000 out of his own pocket and that neither the Trump Organization nor the Trump campaign was part of the transaction. Avenatti has argued that the "hush agreement" Daniels signed in October 2016 is invalid because it was not signed by Trump.

A hearing before Judge S. James Otero in the federal court's Central District in Los Angeles is set for April 30.

'Roseanne' reboot opens big with about 18 million viewers

LOS ANGELES (AP)— Viewers were eager to see ABC's reboot of "Roseanne," with an estimated 18.4 million tuning in to its debut.

The updated sitcom starring Roseanne Barr returned Tuesday, more than two decades after the original ended its hit run. The hour-long debut episode was watched by 10 percent more viewers than saw the May 1997 finale of ABC's original "Roseanne."

That's impressive, given the explosion of alternate platforms and series since then and compared to other successful sitcom reboots.

NBC's "Will & Grace," for example, returned this season with its original 1998-2006 cast to a debut audience of 10.1 million viewers and was quickly renewed for a second and then a third season.

For its freshman year, NBC's show is averaging 5.7 million people watching episodes on the day they air. But with the time-shifting viewership that networks are focusing on, its audience averages 9 million per episode over a seven-day period.

Another promising sign for "Roseanne" was the estimated audience growth from the first half-hour (18 million) to the second (18.9 million), a sign that viewers liked what they saw. Future episodes are a half-hour, airing at 8 p.m. EDT Tuesday.

The revival had a coat-tail effect for the ABC shows that followed, significantly boosting viewership for "blackish" and helping to launch the new Jenna Fischer-Oliver Hudson comedy "Splitting Up Together."

Barr is back as the matriarch of the Conner family, with other returning cast mates including John Goodman, Laurie Metcalf, Sara Gilbert, Michael Fishman and Lecy Goranson.

The family is grappling with new sets of personal issues and political realities: Roseanne embraces President Donald Trump, her sister Jackie (Metcalf) is a staunch opponent, and the two are at odds.

Barr says she thought it was important to show how the Conners deal with the same issues that many American families currently face.

"It shows people's different opinions and how they resolve them," Barr, who counts herself as a Trump supporter, said at the show's New York premiere Monday.

"I saw it happening in all the families I know, so I thought, 'Well this is, you know, it's good, hopefully it will get people talking to each other.'"

Man waiting in the wings tires of one-way romance

DEAR ABBY: I have been communicating with this girl I work with who is currently seeing a guy she's been with for four years. We have a strong connection and physical attraction, and we have both disclosed our feelings to each other.

We communicate rarely by text but never through phone calls, for obvious reasons. Her man works for the same company we do but in a different building. It's clear to me that he doesn't complement her being or lifestyle and will never rise to her level.

I let her know that if she were to break things off with him, I would want to give it a try, and she said the same. She contacts me only when she wants and flirts with me whenever we are in contact, but it's always at her convenience.

We have known each other for a year and a half now, and she claims she cares for me. My question, Abby, is how should I go about moving this situation forward?

IN LINE FOR HER IN NEW YORK

DEAR IN LINE: From where I sit, the ball is in her court, not yours. Because nothing has happened in the last year and a half, you appear to be a diversion rather than the main event.

She has been with her boyfriend for four years. If she were willing to sacrifice the time she has put in with him for a chance to see if things work out with you, it would have happened by now. Because you want a real relationship with someone, my advice is to look elsewhere for one.

DEAR ABBY: My daughter has zero style sense. She tints her hair every color under the sun and dresses straight from the sale bin at the thrift store. She mismatches any and everything she puts on, and she's doing it to her children, too. Their clothes are dingy and outdated. I have bought them stylish clothing. She returns them and gets the ugliest clothes.

She also gives the kids hideous haircuts. If I take them to a stylist, she will buzz the entire cut into a Mohawk. My granddaughter had the most beautiful long hair, and my daughter just cut it into a mullet with short bangs.

Why does she want her kids looking ratty? She keeps a clean house and is an involved, loving mother. It drives me crazy. I try to keep my mouth shut because a gift is a gift. But it really annoys me that she will take back a top-label shirt and exchange it for an ugly one, or a pretty, sparkly dress for my granddaughter for a trashy-looking blue velvet dress with yellow rubber boots. Why?

STYLISH GRAN IN ARIZONA

DEAR STYLISH GRAN: You are asking the wrong person that question. This is something you should ask your daughter. The answer may be as simple as her taste—and her children's—is different from yours. Or, these style choices are something her kids are OK with because this is what their friends are wearing.

TO MY JEWISH READERS: Why is tonight different from every other night? Because Passover begins at sundown. Happy Passover, everyone. May your celebration be sweet!

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

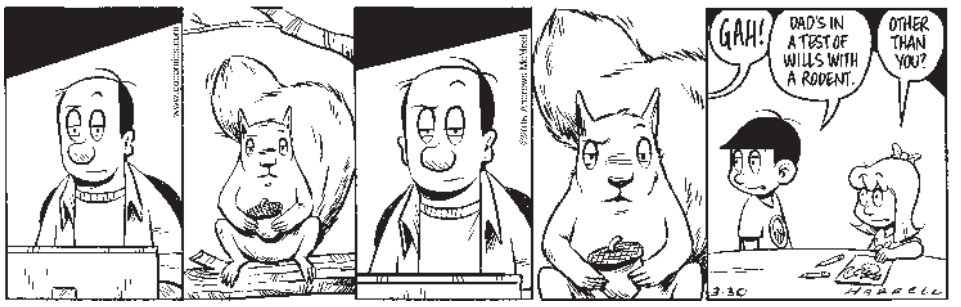
WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE WE'RE HERE?
BECAUSE WE WALKED HERE.
NO, NO... I MEAN HERE ON EARTH.
BECAUSE EARTH CAN SUPPORT LIFE.
NO, I MEAN WHY ARE WE ANYWHERE? WHY DO WE EXIST?
BECAUSE WE WERE BORN.
FORGET IT.
I WILL, THANK YOU.
3-30

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

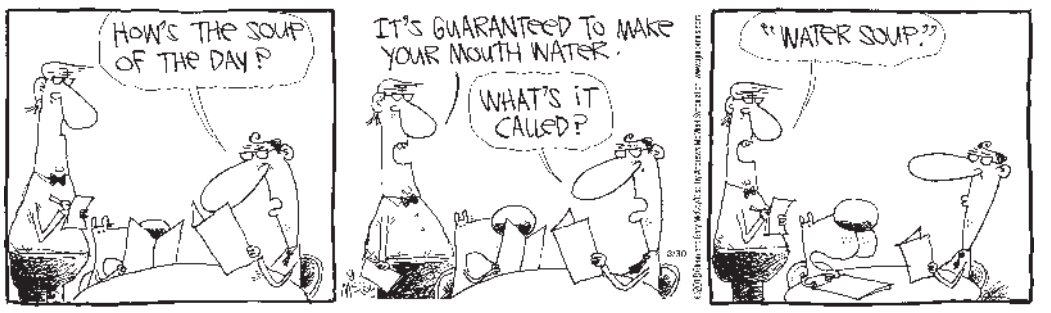
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Candy-heart word
4 Hamlet, e.g.
8 Corp. leaders
12 Bikini top
13 Mr. Stravinsky
14 Pearl Harbor site
15 Cushy job
17 Party cheese
18 Verdon or Stefani
19 Bravery
20 You're looking at them
22 Go yachting
24 Frost
25 Childish
29 Bruins legend
30 Cybermessages
31 Scale member
32 Foot treatment at a spa
34 Pop
35 Lion's share
36 Some kind of a nut
37 Whimsically witty
40 Peacekeeping org.
41 "It can't be!"
42 Sales rep's handout
46 Jupiter counterpart
47 Monastery man
48 "Crying" singer Orbison
49 Sunrise direction
50 Troubles
51 Observe

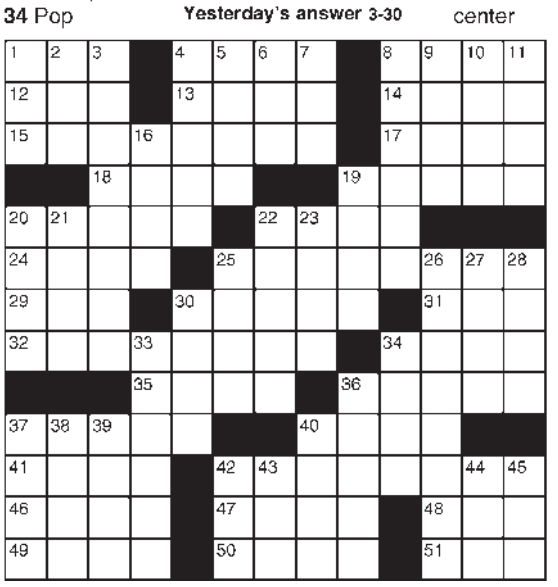
DOWN

1 Scale abbr.
2 Mentalist Geller
3 Cutting edge
4 Cuts into cubes
5 "Son of —!"
6 Neither mate
7 Before
8 Blue hue
9 — Grey tea
10 Toledo's state
11 Litigant
16 Pitcher
19 Test tube
20 Karate blow
21 Traditional tales
22 Brainy
23 Grenoble girlfriend
25 Radio host Don
26 Traveling shows for GIs
27 Took the train
28 Airline to Tel Aviv
30 Earth sci.
33 "Can you give me directions?"
34 Eve's third son
36 Supports
37 Take a nap
38 Actress Perlman
39 Burden
40 Zilch
42 Upscale auto
43 Aussie hopper
44 Shad product
45 Storm center

Solution time: 25 mins.

B	O	S	C	■	W	F	B	■	M	U	S	H
U	T	A	H	■	I	C	U	■	A	P	S	E
Y	O	G	I	■	L	O	G	■	P	H	E	W
S	E	E	F	I	T	■	A	B	L	E	■	■
■	■	■	H	A	S	I	B	R	E	A	K	S
T	A	L	O	N	■	O	O	O	■	V	A	T
O	L	I	N	■	I	S	O	■	J	A	N	E
M	A	V	■	I	N	C	■	S	A	L	E	M
B	R	E	A	K	F	A	S	T	S	■	■	■
■	■	I	D	E	A	■	L	E	M	O	N	S
P	E	T	A	■	N	E	E	■	I	L	I	E
G	L	U	M	■	C	A	D	■	N	A	L	A
A	M	P	S	■	Y	R	S	■	E	V	E	H

Yesterday's answer 3-30



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Katy Mixon, 37; Celine Dion, 50; Eric Clapton, 73; Warren Beatty, 81.

Happy Birthday: If you want something, go after it. Use your skills, talents and experience to elevate you to the next level in both your personal and professional lives. Make changes based on current trends, and you will end up at the forefront of something that can change your life and encourage you to strive for perfection as well as bigger rewards. Your numbers are 5, 12, 23, 29, 34, 41, 46.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Your enthusiasm will help you drum up interest in something you want to pursue. A change in the way you present what you can do will draw interest from an unexpected individual. A physical change will boost your morale. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Put your experience to good use. Your insight and persistence will encourage a dialogue with someone you feel has something to contribute to your plan. Set your goals and stay within budget. Ingenuity and originality will be your tickets to success. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* A situation that deals with someone in your life will need special care. Free up time to help others by making changes without hesitation or complaint. Genuine concern and assistance will be rewarding. ✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Plan something special for someone you love. Altering the way you live or upgrading your living space to accommodate what you want to pursue will increase the likelihood of reaching your goal. Make a romantic gesture and find out where you stand. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Talking to as many people as possible regarding something you want to pursue will help you get one step closer to your goal. You may not like everything you hear, but the information you receive will help you avoid failure and loss. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* If something doesn't feel right, walk away. Emotions can set off a series of events that will lead to regret or possible loss. Know what you are up against before you take something on that will leave you emotionally drained. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Emotions will fluctuate, leaving you at a disadvantage if you let someone push you around. Stand your ground and make it clear what your intentions are and how you plan to proceed. If you don't speak up, you won't get ahead. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Hard work will pay off. Take care of situations that require your skill set and you'll display talents that attract someone who can help contribute to improving your lifestyle. Don't dismiss an offer that you should be taking advantage of. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Take care of family matters. Discuss issues openly and offer suggestions. Being proactive will help cut some of the tension that is brewing. A change of attitude and the way you do things will show you sincerely want to help. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Take the initiative and do things your way. Putting your own spin on a job you've been given will make an impression on someone who counts, but it will also bring out someone else's jealousy. Be gracious accepting your rewards. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Listen and learn. Someone will divulge information that will cause you to overreact. Look for proof before you act on hearsay. Put more time into your personal goals, financial gains and living a healthier lifestyle. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Don't be too forgiving or eager to take on someone else's responsibilities. Know your limitations, and don't get involved in something that will create a dilemma for you with someone you work with or happen to love. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are entertaining, adventuresome and revolutionary. You are enthusiastic and reliable.

(To submit astrological questions to the "Dear Eugenia" column, visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.)

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

				8				
	8					7		
4	9		1		3		6	5
6		4				3		
				4				
		2				5		4
1	7		9		5		4	6
	6						1	
			3					

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 3/30

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

7	8	5	6	4	1	9	3	2
9	1	4	2	5	3	6	7	8
2	6	3	9	8	7	4	5	1
4	9	1	7	2	5	3	8	6
5	2	6	8	3	9	7	1	4
8	3	7	4	1	6	5	2	9
1	7	2	3	6	4	8	9	5
6	5	9	1	7	8	2	4	3
3	4	8	5	9	2	1	6	7

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/29

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

WORKING HOURLY Solution: 8 letters

S	S	P	C	I	N	O	R	T	C	E	L	E	A	T
E	S	S	O	S	S	T	P	M	E	X	E	N	O	N
G	E	N	N	C	T	Ⓒ	A	R	T	N	O	C	T	A
A	N	O	S	H	A	Ⓐ	H	O	O	I	R	B	N	R
W	I	I	T	E	R	Ⓢ	O	B	T	U	S	E	E	U
T	S	T	R	D	T	Ⓗ	S	A	L	B	D	N	M	A
E	U	O	U	U	E	M	P	L	O	Y	M	E	N	T
T	B	M	C	L	T	U	I	J	G	R	E	F	R	S
A	M	O	T	E	C	C	T	T	G	E	T	I	E	E
L	I	R	I	C	E	G	A	R	E	V	A	T	V	R
U	T	P	O	S	T	I	L	F	D	O	R	S	O	M
C	T	P	N	M	I	N	I	M	U	M	W	A	G	E
L	E	R	E	C	E	P	T	I	O	N	I	S	T	E
A	D	O	I	R	E	P	Y	A	P	B	A	N	K	S
C	A	R	E	E	R	K	C	O	L	C	E	M	I	T

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Average, Banks, Benefits, Business, Calculate, Career, Cash, Construction, Contract, Cope, Electronic, Employment, Government, Hospitality, Jobs, Labor, Logged, Manufacturing, Minimum Wage, Mover, Nonexempt, Occupation, Pay Period, Post, Promotions, Proud, Rate, Receptionist, Restaurant, Schedule, Start, Submitted, Timeclock, Wages

Yesterday's Answer: Flagship City

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Interested individuals please send your resume with a list of references, photocopy of a valid photo identification card & updated police clearance to:

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Attn: Jeffrey L. Barr
General Manager in-Charge
San Jose Village
P.O. Box 464
Tinian, MP 96952
or
By Facsimile: 670) 433-4505; or by e-mail: jeff.meti@pticom.com

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Email: info@cnmicasinocommission.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
AMENDED

Opening Date: **March 30, 2018** Closing Date: **April 20, 2018**

The Commonwealth Casino Commission ("Commission") needs immediate recruitment for the following positions:

	POSITION	DIVISION	SALARY RANGE	ANNOUNCEMENT NO.
1.	**COMPLIANCE AGENT**	Compliance	$32,000 - $37,000	CCC-2018-A
2.	**PERMIT & LICENSING OFFICER**	Permit & Licensing	$27,000 - $32,000	CCC-2018-B

- **Salary:** Actual salary level will depend on the applicant's education, experience, and other related qualifications.
- **Location:** Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands ("CNMI").
- **Benefits:** Basic CNMI government employment fringe benefits.
- **Exempted Positions:** These positions are exempted from the CNMI Civil Service system per P.L. 18-56 & P.L. 19-24.

Requirements:

A. Completed CNMI Government **Application for Employment** (OPM-03) - Original
B. **Resume** with accompanying educational and professional credentials & documentations
C. **Police Clearance** (within the last 3 months)
D. Copy of your Driver's License or other form of **Valid Identification with photo**

Education and training claimed under items 24 (A) through (H) of the Application for Employment must be substantiated by an official school transcript, diploma, or certificate. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification.

The Commonwealth Casino Commission is an equal employment opportunity employer. The CCC's EEO policy is to ensure that all employment decisions are made on a non-discriminatory basis, and without regard to sex, race, color, age, national origin, religion, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, political affiliation or belief, or any other status protected by applicable national, federal, state or local law. Please be informed that prior to a job offer, you are required to undergo a pre-employment drug test pursuant to the Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace Policy, Part V.C. of the Personnel Service System Rules and Regulations. The Casino Commission may also require additional criminal background checks and investigations if deemed necessary.

Application Forms can be picked up at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). For information on the **POSITION DESCRIPTION** and other requirements, please contact the HR Officer, Ms. Juanette LG. Sablan at 233-1857/58 or at **info@cnmicasinocommission.com.** Interested persons should submit their completed Employment Application Forms along with supporting documents to the **Commonwealth Casino Commission's Office at Springs Plaza (Unit #13 & #14), Gualo Rai, Saipan, MP 96950.**

Subscribe to the CNMI's First Daily Newspaper for more news, value and information. Please call 235-NEWS.

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Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 5-day run in both print and online editions, for as low as $30 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
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• 5-Liner	**$24**	**$45**

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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

CANCELLATION

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Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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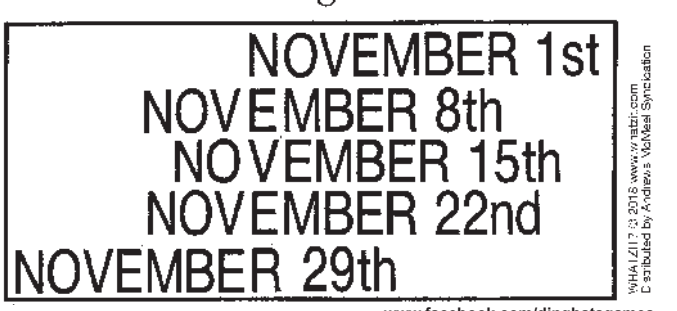
Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.



www.facebook.com/dingbatsgames

Find today's solution in classified section

Astros open as champs; Stanton, Martinez get new starts

NEW YORK (AP)—The Houston Astros will take the field as World Series champions for the first time. Giancarlo Stanton, J.D. Martinez and Eric Hosmer will wear new uniforms following an odd offseason when tanking teams helped sink the free agent market. First-time managers will fill out lineup cards, home run and strikeout totals will be watched closely, and out West, a Japanese import will try to do it all.

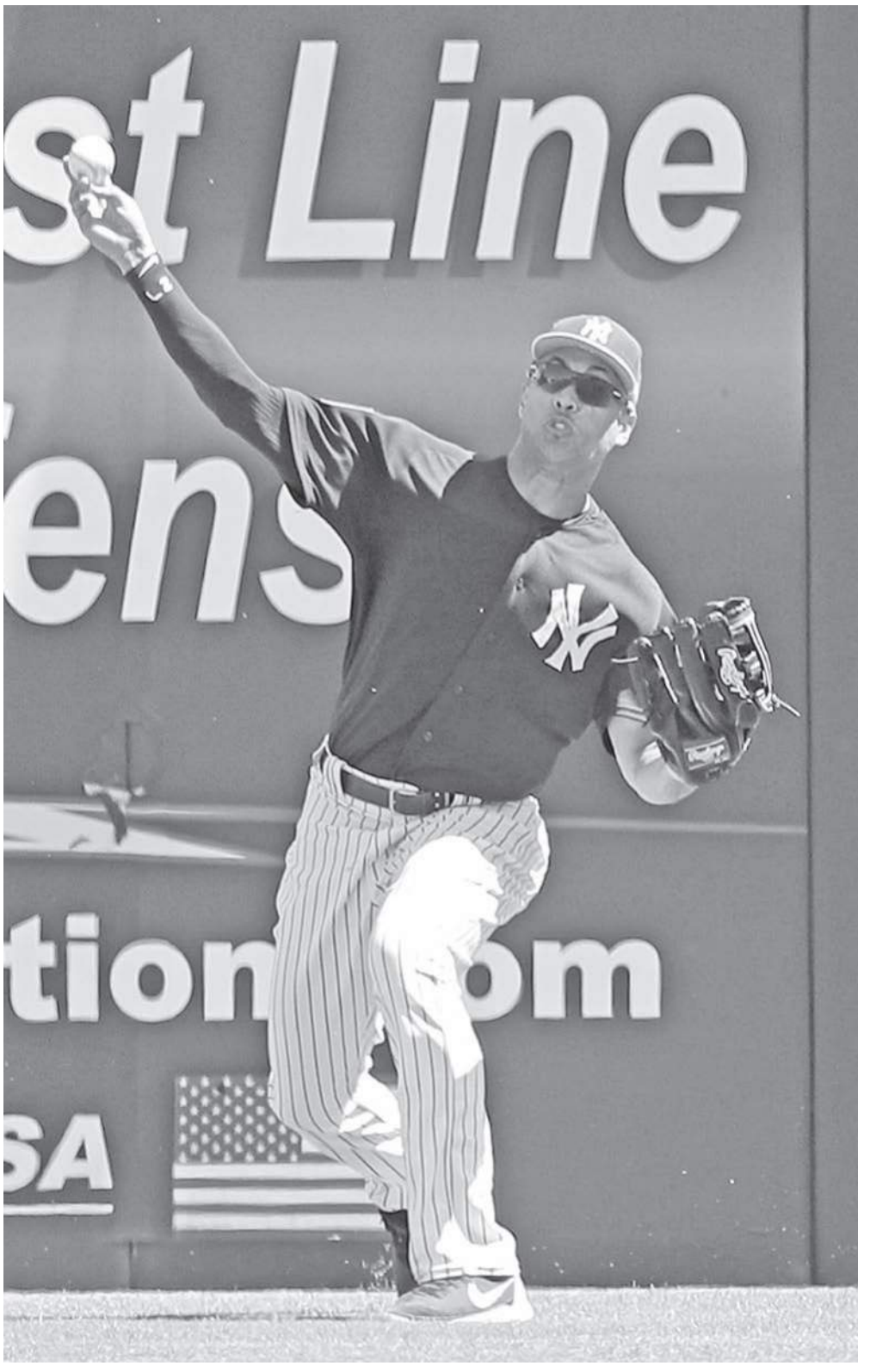
Opening day is here. The 162-game grind of the regular season starts Thursday.

"It's a full-circle moment," Astros ace Justin Verlander said ahead of Houston's opener at Texas. "Just being out there Game 1 of the season, everybody is so high on expectations and so excited about the upcoming season, the unknown, what's going to happen with their team. It's a unique atmosphere."

The March 29 start date is the earliest in Major League Baseball's history excluding international openers, and all teams were scheduled to play on opening day for the first time since 1968 -- the last year before the American and National Leagues split into divisions.

Cincinnati's traditional NL opener was postponed a day in advance because rain is forecast, and so the Reds will begin against Washington on Friday. Cincinnati had not called off its opener because of weather since 1966.

"I'm just excited about standing out for the anthem and getting it started," Washington manager Dave Martinez said before the Nationals arrived in the rainy city. "The boys are ready. I'm ready."



AP

New York Yankees right fielder Giancarlo Stanton fields a double by Pittsburgh Pirates' Christopher Bostick during the fourth inning of a spring training baseball game Thursday, March 15, 2018, in Tampa, Fla.

Martinez is among six new managers, joined by fellow rookie skippers Alex Cora of Boston, Aaron Boone of the New York Yankees, Mickey Callaway of the New York Mets and Gabe Kapler of Philadelphia.

Detroit's Ron Gardenhire is the lone retro hiring, joining the Tigers after leading Minnesota from 2002-14. Baseball has undergone a quick evolution since he left the Twins dugout, favoring upper cuts, long balls and a quicker hook for starting pitchers.

A record 6,105 home runs were hit last season, topping the 5,963 in 2000 at the height of the Steroids Era. Strikeouts set a record for the 10th straight season at 40,104 and sacrifice bunts fell to their lowest level since 1900 at 925. The 59 complete games set a record low for the third straight season and 27 individual shutouts were the fewest since 1878.

Having seen the explosive use of defensive shifts, batters tacked in their approach.

"You're starting to understand that a ball on the ground is essentially an out," Los Angeles Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "So they made adjustments in their mechanics, their approach to elevate the baseball that's going to turn into more flyballs, more homers, some swing and miss."

There is one slight change in the format this year, with the regular season extended by three days to 186 to create more off-days -- an accommodation players negotiated in their labor contract.

It remains to be seen whether another alteration will be major or minor—MLB wants to speed up the pace and instituted a general limit of six mound visits per game without a pitching change, whether by a manager, pitching coach or player. Owners want to cut the average time of a nine-inning game, which reached a record 3 hours, 5 minutes last year, up from 2:46 in 2005.

Players for the most part don't care how long their games take, as long as their team wins.

J.D. Martinez left Arizona for a $110 million, five-year contract with Boston, Hosmer departed Kansas City for a $144 million, seven-year deal with San Diego, and Yu Darvish ended his short stay with the Dodgers for a $126 million, six-year agreement with the Chicago Cubs.

Those were the only nine-figure contracts obtained in a historically slow free agent market that saw dozens of players still without agreements when spring training camps opened in mid-February.

Atlanta, Cincinnati, Detroit, Miami, Oakland, Pittsburgh and Tampa Bay all are in rebuilding cycles, with little hope of earning one of the 10 postseason berths.

Browns send QB Kessler to Jaguars for draft pick

CLEVELAND (AP)—No longer part of the Browns' plans, Cody Kessler got passed to a new team.

Cleveland traded its former starting quarterback to the Jacksonville Jaguars on Monday, the latest move for the Browns who have spent the offseason upgrading the team's most troublesome position following a 0-16 season.

In exchange for Kessler, the Browns will receive a conditional 2019 seventh-round draft pick from the Jaguars, who were in the market to find a backup for starter Blake Bortles.

The 24-year-old Kessler had been in a steady slide down Cleveland's depth chart after starting eight games as a rookie in 2016. But after the team acquired Tyrod Taylor from Buffalo, dealt DeShone Kizer to Green Bay and with the Browns expected to take a quarterback with the No. 1 overall pick in the NFL draft, there was no room for Kessler.

Last season, he entered training camp as the Browns' starter but soon fell behind Kizer and Brock Osweiler and wound up being inactive for 10 games. He appeared in three games, completing 11 passes for 126 yards and was sacked six times.

Kessler's tenure with the Browns began in mild controversy.

After the team passed on taking several other quarterbacks in the 2016 draft, Cleveland's selection of Kessler in the third round drew criticism. Coach Hue Jackson tried to deflect the harsh assessments of Kessler by saying, "Trust me" about the former Southern Cal standout.

Kessler wasn't expected to get on the field as a rookie, but after injuries sidelined Robert Griffin III and Josh McCown, he was thrust into action long before he was probably ready.

Kessler showed toughness and some potential by passing for 1,380 yards and six TDs. But he was sacked 21 times and it didn't help that the Browns lacked playmakers to help him during a 1-15 season.

Jacksonville represents a fresh start for the likable Kessler.

"We are excited about the opportunity to add Cody as depth to our quarterback position," said Jaguars general manager Dave Caldwell. "Despite being just 24 years old, Cody has already seen NFL game action and was very effective as a rookie in 2016, showing accuracy and efficiency in posting a quarterback rating of 90-plus.

"From our research and through getting to know Cody during the draft process, we know he is a smart, tough and competitive young man and we expect him to be a great addition to our quarterback and offensive meeting rooms."

In Denver, Su'a Cravens already appears to be relishing in his change of scenery and his chance at a fresh start.

In a video posted on his Twitter account, the song "A Whole New World" from the Disney movie "Aladdin" played in the background before a smiling Cravens let out a loud "Woo!" Underneath was a caption that read: "Broncos!!!! Here I come!!"

The safety who contemplated retirement last season was acquired Wednesday by Denver from the Washington Redskins, a person with knowledge of the deal confirmed. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the teams had not announced the deal.

FIFA: Infantino won't meddle in World Cup bids

SWITZERLAND (AP)—After Morocco questioned Gianni Infantino's impartiality, FIFA maintained Wednesday that its president won't meddle in the 2026 World Cup bidding contest and reminded the North African nation to abide by the rules.

The prospect of Infantino privately backing the North American campaign was discussed on Tuesday by Morocco bid chairman Moulay Hafid Elalamy.

Bids can be blocked from the FIFA Congress vote on June 13 if they are scored lowly by a task force , which is packed with people appointed to jobs by Infantino. Up to 207 of the 211 member federations will vote, with the four bidding members excluded.

"As a reminder, the FIFA president will not take part in the vote of the congress and is not involved in the work of the task force who will conduct the technical evaluation," FIFA said in a statement to The Associated Press.

At a briefing in Casablanca, Elalamy had complained that "it's very serious if the opinion of a president could change strategic opinions."

The role of the task force has been strengthened after the now-discredited FIFA executive committee in 2010 all but ignored the FIFA-produced technical reports that identified Russia and Qatar as the highest-risk bids when they voted on the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

"The bidding process for the 2026 FIFA World Cup is as fair, objective and transparent as it can get," FIFA said. "We call on all bidders and people involved to abide by those principles."

Morocco is taking on a North American campaign led by the United States, which hopes to host 60 of the 80 games in 2026. Canada and Mexico would stage 10 games each at the first World Cup expanded from 32 to 48 finalists.

James ties Jordan's streak; Cavs top Hornets

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—LeBron James doesn't go into every game thinking he needs to score 10 points.

The 14-time All-Star said it just "organically happens."

It helps, of course, to be a multi-talented 6-foot-8, 250-pound forward viewed by many as the most physically talented basketball player of all-time.

The 33-year-old James matched Michael Jordan's streak of 866 consecutive double-digit scoring games on Wednesday night, scoring 41 points to help the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Jordan-owned Charlotte Hornets 118-105 and remain in third place in the Eastern Conference.

"I can't tell you how I've been able to do it," James said. "Any time I'm mentioned with some of the greats, and arguably the greatest basketball player of all-time in Mike, it's just another feat for me to be just appreciative and humbled by what I'm able to do."

He wasn't the only one making history.

Although the game got away from the Hornets in the fourth quarter, there was still the matter of Kemba Walker attempting to pass Dell Curry as the franchise's career scoring leader. After a sluggish three quarters, Walker scored 11 points in the fourth, including a reverse layup with 20 seconds left to break Curry's mark of 9,839 points.

"I wasn't supposed to be here," the 6-foot-1, 184-pound Walker told the crowd moments after the game ended. "... Anything is possible. If I can do it, anybody can."

Walker had to grab a towel to wipe away tears after breaking the record.

AP

Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James goes up to dunk against the Charlotte Hornets during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Charlotte, N.C., Wednesday, March 28, 2018.

James approached Walker at midcourt as time expired, gave him a huge hug and whispered congratulations in his ear, telling him it was an incredible accomplishment.

"Listen, if you can be the all-time leading scorer in any franchise, that's incredible," James said. "That's an incredible feat. I definitely went over and just told him how incredible that was. Even though with the season that they're having, when accomplishments happen throughout the season, you try not to take them for granted. I think it's an incredible feat for him.

Timberwolves 126, Hawks 114

In Minneapolis, Karl-Anthony Towns scored a franchise-record 56 points and grabbed 15 rebounds for his league-leading 63rd double-double, leading the Minnesota Timberwolves to a victory over the Atlanta Hawks.

Towns was 6 of 8 from 3-point range for Minnesota, which recovered after a disappointing loss Monday to Memphis.

Andrew Wiggins added 17 points and Jeff Teague had 11 points and eight assists for the Timberwolves (43-33), who avoided a third straight loss by shooting 53.3 percent, including 13 of 30 from behind the arc.

Celtics 97, Jazz 94

In Salt Lake City, Jaylen Brown made a 3-pointer with 0.1 seconds left to lift Boston to the road win.

Brown scored 21 points and Jayson Tatum added 16 for the Celtics, who won their fifth straight despite a shorthanded roster.

With Kyrie Irving out after knee surgery and Marcus Morris and Al Horford sidelined with ankle injuries, the Celtics finished a 4-0 trip.

Donovan Mitchell scored 22 points for Utah. Ricky Rubio had 14 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds, and Jae Crowder added 16 points.

76ers 118, Knicks 101

In Philadelphia, Dario Saric had 26 points and 14 rebounds, and the Sixers won their eighth straight game despite losing All-Star Joel Embiid to a facial injury.

J.J. Redick scored 21 points for Philadelphia (44-30), which stayed a half-game behind Cleveland for third in the Eastern Conference. The 76ers, who already clinched their first playoff appearance since 2012, have the franchise's most victories since the 2002-03 club won 48 games.

Embiid was taken to a hospital for precautionary testing after a nasty collision with teammate Markelle Fultz early in the second quarter. The team said he had a facial contusion, but did not have a concussion.

Grizzlies 108, Trail Blazers 103

In Memphis, MarShon Brooks scored 14 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter in his first game with Memphis, helping the Grizzlies to their second straight win.

Brooks made each of his four 3-point attempts in the final period in his first NBA appearance since April 16, 2014, with the Lakers. He signed a 10-day contract with Memphis on Tuesday.

Dillon Brooks had 18 points for the Grizzlies (21-54).

Lakers 103, Mavericks 93

In Los Angeles, Brook Lopez scored 22 points and Julius Randle added 20 points and 10 rebounds, leading the Lakers to the victory.

Los Angeles' Brandon Ingram had 13 points, seven rebounds and four assists in 23 minutes in his return after missing 12 games with a groin strain.

Lonzo Ball had eight points, five rebounds and four assists before leaving late in the third quarter. Ball had his left knee wrapped in ice briefly, the same knee that kept him out for 16 games in January and February.

Clippers 111, Suns 99

In Phoenix, Tobias Harris scored 27 points, and the Clippers gained a little ground in the Western Conference playoff race.

Harris had 15 points in the third quarter, and Los Angeles pulled away early in the fourth with an 18-0 run.

The Clippers (41-34) moved to a game out of the eighth playoff spot, one game behind the Jazz after Utah's 97-94 loss to Boston.

Austin Rivers had 18 points and eight assists for the Clippers, who have won four of five.

Nets 111, Magic 104

In Orlando, D'Angelo Russell and Caris LeVert each scored 16 points to lead Brooklyn to the victory.

Jarrett Allen added 15 points and DeMarre Carroll had 14 points and 12 rebounds for the Nets, who stopped a three-game losing streak. Rondae Hollis-Jefferson and Joe Harris also scored 14 and Allen Crabbe had 13.

Nikola Vucevic led Orlando with 24 points and 15 rebounds, and Mario Hezonja added 23 points for the Magic, who have lost nine of their last 11. Aaron Gordon added 15 points and D.J. Augustin had 14.

The Nets outscored the Magic 17-2 to start the fourth quarter.

Jonny's Roil Soil widens gap in A Division

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jonny's Roil Soil players pose for a photo after keeping the lead in the A Division of the Saipan Electronic Darts Association-Bud Light League 2018.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Naked Fish Ridin'Darrty members pose for a photo following their win over the 6JMS Predators in the A Division of the Saipan Electronic Darts Association-Bud Light League 2018 last week.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Jonny's Roi Soil players are slowly distancing themselves from the rest of the field in the A Division of the Saipan Electronic Darts Association-Bud Light League 2018.

The Roil Soil used a 4-0 sweep in the opening Singles Regular Cricket in completing a 13-4 win over the Amari's Gunners last week. The one-sided victory improved Jonny's Roi Soil's record to 68-34.

The Naked Fish Ridin'Darrty, a 10-7 winner over the 6JMS Predators, is in second place with a 59-43 mark, followed by the 56-46 slate of the 6JMS Mafia 1. A 10-7 victory versus sister squad Terminators allowed 6JMS Mafia 1 to take the No. 3 spot in the division rankings.

In other pairings, the Scorpions, the sixth squad supported by 6JMS, completed an 11-6 decision against the Franken Drunken Warriors, while the 101 Proofers escaped with a 9-8 win over the Strikers.

OTHER RESULTS

Tuesday B

■ Mafia II 11, Thunder 4
Strikers 9, Empy 6
Petmalu 8, Chamberos 7

Masters

■ Nakayoshi 10, Mafia 7
■ Proofers 9, Pythons 8

C Division

■ River Shots 13, Wettzside 2
■ Bulls Hitters 11, Bull It 4
■ Dart Vaders 9, Re-Darts 6
■ Bulldogs 12, Like A G4 3

Fanihi B

■ Mafia III 11, Warriors 4

■ Proofers 11, Darty Minded 4
■ Shaka 11, Desaten II 4
■ Bandits 8, PungPang 7

Flame Tree

■ Drillers 11, Jump It 4
■ Kyodai 10, Na' Gupu 5
■ Darrty 9, Board 6
■ Real Deal 9, Killaz 6
■ Dartaholiks 8, Creepers 7

Inter-government

■ CUC Mafia 9, Crushers 6

Black Ball increases lead in Thursday League

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The 9 Eleven 8 Black Ball increased its lead in the Saipan Billiards Association-Budweiser Open 8-Ball Thursday League after a 13-0 crushing of the VFW Assassins last week.

The quartet of Neil Ayson, Tata Hamoy, Rodel Dela Cruz, and Rey Hermogenes proved to be too much for Assassins crew Julian Reyes, Jay Torres, Mel Rengiil, Mike Okelley, and Henry Reyes, as the shutout win gave Black Ball a 55-23 record.

The Black Ball now leads the Amari's IT&E Homeboyz by eight wins as the latter earned a 47-31 mark after 78 games in the weekly billiards tournament. Sister teams 9 Eleven MJD Warriors (41-37) and Titans (40-38) complete the Top 4.

Sands Team SCS (37-41), Brannon's Jam Shooters (36-42), Amari's Intensity 8 (33-45), and VFW Assassins (23-55) are the the teams playing in the Thursday League.

In the Tuesday League, the 9 Eleven Wildboyz and sister squad Marianas Water are tied on top with similar 52-26 records and are followed closely by the Amari's IT&E Destroyers (51-27).

Marianas Water downed the Destroyers, 8-5, to gain a share of the lead, while the Masters Touch nipped the Str8 Black Ball, 7-6. The Wildboyz drubbed the Builders, 11-2, to stay on top.

TANHOLDINGS

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Emil Antonio delivered the goals for Kanoa in the second half. Han and Toves also scored one goal each in the first 30 minutes of the match, while MP United was held to one goal in the second half, courtesy of Andrew Chung's shot, to lose the lead and the match.

In the Matansa-Kanoa-2 tiff, Nazzir Altamirano and Philip Megino registered one goal apiece for the former, which got an own goal off it opponent's booboo. Markus Pelisamen tallied the lone goal for Kanoa-2.

GIRLS U16
Kanoa 2, Shirley's 2

Kanoa, with its 3-1-0 mark, retained the No. 1 spot in the team standings after forcing a draw against rival Shirley's at the Francisco M. Sablan Middle School Field.

Sue Ann Huevas made the equalizer for Kanoa in the 48th minute, while Paulynn Joyce recorded the other goal for the division leader. Shirley's drew its pair of goals from Jerlyn Castillo, who hit the board in the 20th and 43rd minute.

Southern United 6, Paire 1

In the second game, Southern United notched its first win after beating Paire.

Keisha Deleon Guerrero had a hat trick for Southern United, which got an own goal and one each from Mariana Castro and Nathanette Blas. River Miles made the only goal for Paire.

TanHoldings 4, Matansa 1

TanHoldings is still in the shadow of Kanoa, as it improved to a 3-1-1 mark following a victory over Matansa in the third game last weekend.

Jenny Ann Capayas nailed the pair of goals for TanHoldings, while Mary Joy Aniana and Judy Ann Andebor contributed one each. Jenelyn Palad drilled the lone goal for Matansa.

BOYS U16
Kanoa 4, MPU 4

Over at the Koblerville Elementary School, Kanoa (4-2-0) is ahead in the standings after a draw against MP United (3-2-1).

Ian Karl Maniago had a hat trick for Kanoa, making two of his goals in the second half to keep his squad undefeated. Merrick Toves tallied the under goal for Kanoa in the second half, which started with MP United on top, 2-1.

Oliver Fajardo and Rintaro Miyawaki scored for MP United in the first half and the latter added two more in the second.

TanHoldings 13, Paire

In the second game, TanHoldings crushed Paire.

Taka Borja powered TanHoldings to the easy win after firing six goals, while Brandon Tenorio chipped in three, and Reginald Pascual added two.

Shirley's 2, Matansa 0

Shirley's got its first win of the season after pulling off an upset over Matansa.

David Joson and Ryan Jay Pangelinan scored for Shirley's in the 16th and 33rd minute, respectively, to end their team's five-game losing skid.

BOYS U18
MPU 7, Kanoa 0

MP United earned its third win after pinning down Kanoa in the first game at the Hopwood pitch.

Sunjoon Tenorio and Miyawaki had a pair of goals for MP United, which now has a 3-1-0 mark—the same record TanHoldings has. MP United, however has to settle for the No. 2 spot in the standings, as TanHoldings, which drew a bye last week, had more goals after four games, 22-19.

Matansa 3, NDT 1

Matansa posted its second victory after topping the National Development Team.

Ronnel Ocanada registered two goals for Matansa, while Clarence Cabang chipped in one. Brittany Wally delivered the lone goal for the winless NDT.

670

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to Saipan, we will work on those areas so when we compete again in the Philippines, we will be a better team," Ajoste said.

"We struggled early in the tournament, but we're able to work on our game and chemistry towards the end, so that's a good thing. We will return to practice and make the adjustments," he added.

Adrian Flores, who handled the 670 Sonics' U16 crew, said the PH tournament was an eye-opener for the squad, especially for his players who are just starting to improve their skills after switching to basketball.

"Some of our players were into soccer before and just moved to basketball for a year or two so it's a great experience for them to compete here. We will continue to develop them and comeback here with a stronger team," Flores said.

Flores' squad got only one win in the tournament, while the 670 Sonics' U18 crew dropped all their games. Despite their dismal showing in the competition, two 670 Sonics players were recognized during the event's closing ceremony. Emmanuel Cobacha of the U18 team and U16's Khristian Itaas were handed the Most Improved Player awards.

KOREANS

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(3:34:56) in the 30 to 34; American Chris Nadeau (2:27:30), Korean Young Jun Choi (2:28:41), and Guamanian Steve Camacho (2:35:19) in the 35 to 39; Hong Kong's Chun Yu Hui (2:46:57), Japan's Naoki Mochizuki (3:03:20), and Korean Kab Su Ju (3:05:27) in the 40-44; Hong Kong's Chris Lee (2:52:08), and Korea's Yu Hun Park (2:58:11) and Ho Soo Jeong (3:05;27) in the 45 to 49; Korea's Chan Ho Shim (3:10:33) and Hong Kong's Voon Keat Lai (3:21:32) in the 50 to 54; Korea's Dong In Park (2:51:32), Sung Moon Yang (2:56:29), Han Soo Yang (3:01:59) in the 55 to 59; Japan's Tatsuzo Ohara (3:00:10) in the 60 to 64; and Tomoki Fujitake (3:13:25) in the over 65.

The Koreans also led the men's relay team after clocking in at 2:35:00, while Team MMC of swimmer Ivan Ilmov, biker Dr. Tony Stearns, and runner Leon Etienne and came in at second (2:50:57), Agape Kriegers placed third (2:57:39).

Guam's Triple M topped the women's relay division (2:59:00), followed by Guam Women TRI (3:07:06) and Triple G (3:14:25), while Fiesta Saipan (2:45:14), Marianas (3:03:33), and Kanoa 1 (3:13:11) were the Top 3 teams in the mixed relay.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Rampaging GSM nears sweep

Seven teams tried and failed. Now, only two squads—the Chalan Kanoa Bears and the defending champion Aces—stand on GSM's way of sweeping the elimination round of the 2018 Saipan Baseball League.

The veteran-ladened GSM clinched its seventh straight win after completing a 15-5 crushing of Titanium on Wednesday night at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

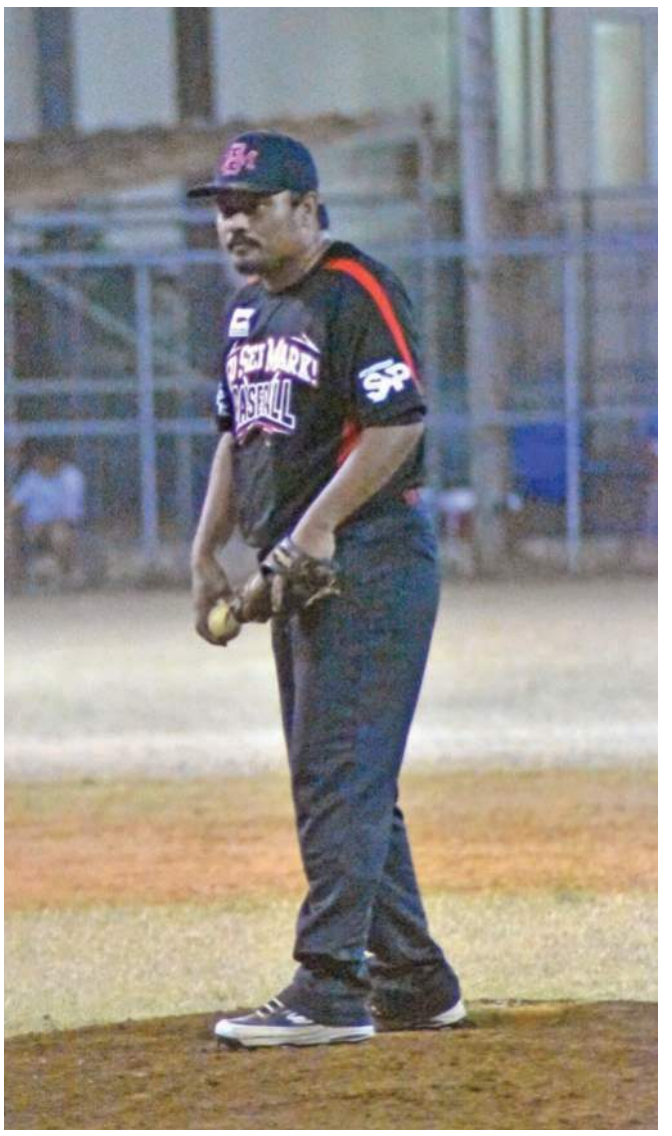
Jerome Delos Santos drove in three runs, while Franco Nakamura and Lancaster Secharmidal added two apiece, and Keoni Kaipat had five shutout innings for GSM to hand Titanium its third loss in six games.

Delos Santos scored three times and went 3-for-4, including an RBI double in GSM's six-run eighth inning. Nakamura was 2-for-5 with a sacrifice fly in the fourth and an RBI triple in the ninth to go with his two runs, while Secharmidal made a two-RBI single on a 1-for-4 batting. Manny Sablan went 2-for-5 with one run and an RBI, while Lorenzo Sebaklim also had one run after going 2-for-4.

Kaipat blanked Titanium in five innings, limiting their opponent to three hits, striking out four, and walking only one. Vince Cepeda pitched three innings in relief and gave up three earned runs on four hits and got three strikeouts and a walk.

Roy Celis closed out for GSM and struck out Gerald Cabrera after Brian Camacho got on base and scored on consecutive errors by Kelvin Kapileo at the bottom of the ninth. Joe Palacios also reached second on GSM's back-to-back errors, but was stranded after Celis fanned Austin Benavente and forced Glen Camacho to ground out to end the game.

GSM hopes to extend its streak on April 6 when it faces the Bears, while the unbeaten squad will close out the single-elimination round against the reigning titlists Aces on April 10.



JON PEREZ
GSM's Roy Celis waits for the sign of catcher Pat Alepuyo before throwing a pitch during their game against Titanium in the 2018 Saipan Baseball League last Wednesday night at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

Mariners 17, Indians 10

Shane Yamada hit an inside-the-park grand slam as the Mariners rallied back to keep the Indians winless in six games and help their team improve to an even 3-3 record.

The Indians were leading, 9-7, and were one out away from ending the top of the seventh inning and boosting their chances for the first victory of the season when Yamada, batting for the second time in that frame, blasted an almost over-of-the fence hit.

This was the second time the Indians were close to winning a game as they led the Mariners, 9-1, after six complete before the Indians' 11-run rampage in the seventh spoiled the party.

Meanwhile, the league cancelled last night's match between the Aces and the Ballistics in observance of Maundy Thursday and the game has been moved to April 20. No game is also set tonight.

Tagaman Triathlon sees increase in turnout

A pack of 152 athletes from 13 countries and territories joined the 2018 Tagaman 51.50/70.3 Triathlon last Saturday—42 percent more than the turnout in the 2017 race.

Athletes commenced their endurance trial off the shores of Kanoa Resort, circumnavigating two World War II tanks in the lagoon before heading ashore to the bike and run transition at Kilili Beach Park. Bikers zipped along quiet roads through the unspoiled nature of Marpi, while the run course traversed the picturesque western lagoon shoreline of Saipan.

Leading the Olympic distance pack was Sol Ji Om of Korea (2:27:30), while Chris Nadeau of Guam (2:27:30) was the first male finisher. Leong Tim Law of Hong Kong finished first in the Half Ironman distance after timing in at 4:23:20) and edging out Alesandr Dorovskikh of Russia (4:31:40) and last year's Olympic distance winner. They were followed closely by the first female finisher, Manami Iijima of Guam (4:34:30).

Participating countries and territories this year were Hong Kong, Korea, China, Japan, Guam, Russia, Taiwan, U.S., Guatemala, France, Spain, New Zealand, and the Marianas.

The Tagaman Triathlon, an annual signature event of the Marianas Visitors Authority, was jointly organized with Triathlon Association of the CNMI and aimed at attracting visiting athletes and media coverage for the Marianas.

"The legend of Taga lives on as we see strong support from the community and the number of participants this year," TRAC president Ricky Castro said. "We see the continuous revival of Tagaman with the introduction of new course and improvement on running the event, and we expect even more triathletes as we celebrate the 30th Tagaman Triathlon next year."

"We thank all our sponsors, volunteers and supporters who helped make the 2018 Tagaman Triathlon a success," said MVA Community Project Specialist Ed Diaz.

Platinum sponsors of this year's Tagaman were Kanoa Resort Saipan, IT&E and Tan-Holdings. Gold sponsors were T Galleria, MARPAC, Inc., Bridge Capital LLC, JC Tenorio Ent., Brabu Pharmacy, Triple J Enterprises, PowerAde, KFC Triathlon, Islander Rent-A-Car, and Hyatt Regency Saipan. Silver sponsors were Coca Cola, GU Energy, Pacific Insurance Underwriters, Inc., Tri-Tour, Pacific Development Inc., The Shack, and Marianas Health Services. Bronze sponsors were Fiesta Resort & Spa, Saipan Ice & Water, StaR Water Company, Let's Go Tour, Laolao Bay Golf & Resort, Kingfisher Golf Links, Mariana Resort & Spa, Marianas Medical Center, and RNV Forex. Event supporters include the Department of Public Safety, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Deparment of Public Works, DPS Boating and Traffic, Division of Parks and Grounds, Elliot Systems, Agape Christian School, Napu Outrigger Canoe Club, 500 Sails, Northern Marianas Athletics, Hawaiian Rock Products, and the American Red Cross NMI Chapter. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Bikers are framed by the scenic Suicide Cliff as they race in the Tagaman 51.50/70.3 Triathlon last Saturday.

SSC thanks participants, sponsors of swim meet

The 2018 Saipan Swim Club International Meet and 39th Annual SSC Ocean Swim were completed over the weekend, thanks to the participants, officials, sponsors, volunteers, and the visiting teams.

"This was by far the fastest meet we have hosted in the last five years and the depth and talent level of swimming in the North Pacific has definitely increased in the last five years. There were many club and national age groups broken and many more personal best times. The camaraderie that has grown among the teams has been great to witness. Times are important, but the friendships will last forever," SSC coach Jacoby Winkfield said.

Over 100 swimmers in the U8 to over 17 age group raced at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool, while more than 100, too competed in the ocean swim in the lagoon near Naked Fish in Susupe. SSC members led the participants in both the swim meet and ocean swim and they were joined in the races by Andersen Marlins, Typhoons Swim Club, Manhoben, Manukai, and Tsunami Guam, Palau, Pohnpei, and Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan members.

"I would like to thank Marianas Resort for their continued support and going the extra mile to make the pool look great for the swim meet. We received many compliments from the off-island teams about how great the pool looked. Thanks to UR Tents for their continued support of the Saipan Swim Club and to the off-island teams for coming," Winkfield said.

"Special thanks to the parents of SSC Swimmers for their dedication, hard work, and commitment to CNMI swimming. Without their support, SSC would not be able to continue hosting meets like this," he added.

Next up for SSC is the Escape from Managaha on April 7. Registration is $30 before April 1 and $35 after that. The boat will leave Smiling Cove at 6am. For more information, send email to saipanswimclub@gmail.com. ***(Roselyn B. Monroyo)***

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Swimmers get ready for the medley relay race in the 2018 SSC International Meet held last Saturday at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.

Astros open as champs; Stanton, Martinez get new starts
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Sports

James ties Jordan's streak; Cavs top Hornets
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TanHoldings, Kanoa ahead

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
TanHoldings Football Club's Taka Borja, right, uses his right foot to deflect a kick from Paire FC's Ethan Taisacan during their boys U15 division game in the 2018 NMIFA Spring Youth League last Saturday at the Koblerville Elementary School Field.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

TanHoldings Football Club and Kanoa FC are the frontrunners in two divisions of the 2018 NMIFA Spring Youth League as matches were completed last Saturday at the various school pitches on Saipan.

In the co-ed U13 age group, TanHoldings kept the top spot with its 6-0-0 record, while the club is slightly ahead in the boys U18 class. Kanoa duplicated TanHoldings' feat, as the former enjoys the top view in the boys U15 and girls U16 divisions.

TanHoldings-1 (6-0-0 win-loss draw record) moved two wins up against the second-running MP United (4-1-1) after whipping TanHoldings-2, 14-3 in their co-ed U13 game at the Hopwood Middle School Field. Anthony Bergancia and Harry Domulot teamed up in demolishing TanHoldings-2 (0-0-5) as they each scored four goals in the rout.

In other results in the division, Kanoa-1 (3-1-2) edged MP United, 6-5, while Matansa (3-0-3) outclassed Kanoa-2 (1-0-5), 3-1.

Kanoa-2 mounted a comeback in the second half after facing a 2-4 deficit in the first. John Mark Anastacio, Markus Toves, Taehun Han, and Joe

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Koreans dominate; CNMI bets make podium

JON PEREZ
The CNMI's Emily Northrop smiles as she crosses the finish line of last Saturday's 29th Tagaman Triathlon at the Kilili Beach Park.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Visiting South Korean triathletes lorded it over in the age group competition of last Saturday's Tagaman Triathlon 51.50.

The Koreans had 16 podium finishes, five of which were first place and a sweep in the 55 to 59 division. Japan also had five No. 1 placers and nine overall, while the CNMI had six local bets ending up in the Top 3.

Sol Ji Om led the finishers list and ruled the women's U19 class after a timing in at 2:26:01. She was followed by compatriot Jung Won Lee (2:27:19) and the CNMI's Coume Kaga (3:15:24). American Lauren Weikle (4:23:04) was the lone participant in the 20 to 24 age group.

Koreans Wonjeong Choi (2:30:40) and Yuyeong Cheo (2:37:33), and the CNMI's Emily Northrop (2:56:50) were the Top 3 placers in the 25 to 29 division, while Jennifer Camacho of Guam (2:51:13) and Kathy Ruszala of the CNMI (3:52:30) finished 1-2 in the women's 30 to 34.

Hong Kong's Janice Lee (2:50:50), the CNMI's Ayano Braxton (2:58:27), and the U.S.' Tabitha Martin (3:01:24) made up the Top 3 in the women's 35 to 39; Korean Sang Mi Oh (2:39:02), Guam's Kristina Ingvarsson (2:39:08), and Korea's Bo Young Kim (3:20:22) in the 40 to 44; and the CNMI's Ayumi Kaga (3:12:49) and Kaouri Takahashi (3:17:54), and New Zealand's Catherine Reaves (3:19:42) in the 45 to 49.

In the men's side, Japan's Kenta Kikuchi (U19, 2:36:00); Kenta Goto (3:11:16) and Yasuhiro Kida (3:14:14) of Japan rounded out the Top 3 in the 25 to 29 age group; Japanese Masaki Nakamura (2:58:03), and Koreans So Kwon Kang (3:07:28) and Eideun Jung

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670 Sonics coaches vow for better showing in PH caging

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

A much improved 670 Sonics team will show up the next time the group competes in the Dreamers International Basketball Tournament in the Philippines.

670 Sonics U18 coach Omar Ajoste, in an interview with the event organizers at the conclusion of the tournament last Wednesday, said having experienced the high level of play of teams from the Philippines, Guam, and Canada gave their players a clear perspective on what they need to work on with their game to keep up with their competitors.

"The guys did their best in every game, but still we have a lot of things to work on after playing against teams from the Philippines, Guam and Canada. When we come back

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
670 Sonics U16's Khristian Itaas, fifth left, shows his Most Improved Player award during the closing ceremony for the 3rd Dreamers International Basketball Tournament in the Philippines last Wednesday.